

Through detailed discussions of several Buddhist and Chinese moral concepts and beliefs and accompanied by some edifying short stories, this book investigates three types of ethical treatment of animals in early Chinese Buddhism: the imperial bans on animal sacrifice; the early development of the two unique and living traditions of vegetarianism; and the freeing of animals. The book presents a demonstration of the early Chinese acceptance of Indian Buddhism, providing the reader with a better understanding of the early history of Chinese Buddhism in general, and of the integration of Chinese and Indian Buddhist cultures in particular.

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Cover image: *Herding Horses* by Han Gan, 8th century

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Pu Chengzhong

Ethical Treatment of Animals
in Early Chinese Buddhism

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BELIEFS AND PRACTICES



Pu Chengzhong

Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism

Ethical Treatment of Animals
in Early Chinese Buddhism:
Beliefs and Practices

By

Pu Chengzhong

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P U B L I S H I N G

Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism:
Beliefs and Practices,
by Pu Chengzhong

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PREFACE

This is a revision of my PhD dissertation, ‘Kindness towards Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism’, submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, in 2005. In this edition, most of the changes made are to the first chapter of the original version: the original first chapter has been split into two chapters dealing animal sacrifice and vegetarianism respectively. Apart from this structural change, I also added some details to contents of the two new chapters.

I would like to thank those who have helped me in one way or another in the years I spent in Sri Lanka and especially at the SOAS, London. I gratefully pay my homage to my spiritual mentor Ven. Kwang Sheng, abbot of the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery in Singapore, for his constant encouragement and financial support. Without his generosity my study of all those years would not have been possible.

Sincere thanks go to my supervisor Professor T. H. Barrett for the unfailing support, sustained encouragement, penetrating comments and tactful suggestions he provided. His sound scholarship and vast knowledge of the bibliography of Chinese studies were as invaluable as his long hours of careful reading of the drafts of my work. I also owe him a debt of gratitude for putting his own personal book collection at my disposal. I will cherish all the sessions of our conversations not only because of their academic value but also because they were enjoyable. I am also grateful to the examiners of my dissertation, Professor Roel Sterckx of Cambridge University and Dr. Antonello Palumbo of the SOAS, for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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Last but by no means least, thanks are also due to the staff of the SOAS library, particularly to Yelena Shlyuger who helped me gain access to books unavailable in SOAS through the inter-library loan service, to Sue Small (librarian of the Chinese section) for her assistance in locating several difficult-to-find books, and to the staff of Special Collection Reading Room. I enjoyed their professional and friendly assistance.

Pu Chengzhong
Singapore, November, 2013

ABBREVIATIONS

ADEC	Roel Sterckx, <i>The Animal and the Daemon in Early China</i> , Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002
AM	<i>Asia Major</i> (third series)
BS	<i>Beishi</i> 北史, 10 vols., by Li Yanshou (李延壽 7 th cent.), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
CGDJ	<i>Chengju guangming dingyi jing</i> 成具光明定意經, T. 15, No. 630, pp. 451b-458b
CQZZ	<i>Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu</i> 《春秋左傳》注, 4 vols., Yang Bojun antt., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981
CS	<i>Chenshu</i> 陳書, 2 vols., by Yao Silian (姚思廉 557-637), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972
CSZJ	<i>Chu sanzang jiji</i> 出三藏記集 comp. by Shi Sengyou (釋僧祐 445-518), T. 55, No. 2145, pp. 1-114
CYJ	<i>Chuyao jing</i> 出曜經, T. 4, No. 212, pp. 609c-776a
DFBFBEJ	<i>Dafangbian fo bao-en jing</i> 大方便佛報恩經, T. 3, No. 156, pp. 124a-166a. Translator unknown
DZDL	<i>Da zhidu lun</i> 大智度論, T. 25, No. 1509, pp. 57c-756c
FGL	<i>Fenbie gongde lun</i> 分別功德論, T. 25, No. 1507, pp. 30a-52c
FSDBNPJ	<i>Foshuo dabanihuan jing</i> 佛說大般泥洹經, T. 12, No. 376, pp. 853a-899c. trsl by Buddhabadra and Shi Baoyu during 417-418.
FSTYJS	<i>Fengsu tongyi jiaoshi</i> 《風俗通義》校釋, by Ying Shao (應劭 ca. 140-204), Wu Shuping antt., Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1980
FWJ	<i>Fanwang jing Pilushenafu shuo pusa xindi jiepin dishi</i> 梵網經盧舍那佛說菩薩心地戒品第十, T. 24, No. 1484, pp. 997b-1010a
FYZL	<i>Fayuan zhulin</i> 法苑珠林, comp. by Shi Daoshi (釋道世 d. 683), T. 53, No. 2122, pp. 269a-1030a

- GHMJ *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, comp. by Shi Daoxuan (釋道宣 596-667), T. 52, No. 2103, pp. 97a-361a
- GSZ *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, by Shi Daoxuan, T. 50, No. 2060, pp. 425a-707a
- GY *Guoyu* 國語, 2 vols., Shanghai shifan daxue guji zhenglizu ed., Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978
- HHS *Houhan shu* 後漢書, 12 vols., by Fan Ye (范曄 398-445), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971
- HJAS *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
- HMJ *Hongming ji* 弘明集, comp. by Shi Sengyou, T. 52, 2102, pp. 1a-96b
- HNHL *Huainan Honglie jijie* 《淮南鴻烈》集解, by Liu An (劉安 d. 122BCE), Liu Wendian antt., 2 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989
- HR *History of Religions*
- HS *Hanshu* 漢書, 12 vols., by Ban Gu (班固 32-92), Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1962
- HWCS *Hanwei congshu* 漢魏叢書, collt. & ed. by Cheng Rong (程榮 fl. 1592), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 1925 reprint of the edition made in the Wanli period (1573-1620) of the Ming dynasty
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JLYX *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相, comp. by Shi Baochang (釋寶唱 ca. 466-526), T. 53, No. 2121, pp. 1-268
- JLZJZ *Jinlou zi jiaozhu* 《金樓子》校注, by Xiao Yi (蕭繹 508-554), Xu Deping ed., Taiwan: Jiaxin shuini gongsi wenhua jijinhui, 1969
- JS *Jinshu* 晉書, 10 vols., by Fang Xuanling (房玄齡 579-648), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974
- KZJYSZ *Kongzi jiayu shuzheng* 《孔子家語》疏證, Chen Shike collt. & comt., Shanghai shudian, 1987
- LDSBJ *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀, by Fei Changfang (費長房 fl. 597), T. 49, No. 2034, pp. 22c-127c
- LDJJ *Liudu jijing* 六度集經, T. 3, No. 152, pp. 1a-52b
- LH *Lunheng* 論衡, by Wang Chong (王充 27-97) Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1974
- LJJJ *Liji jijie* 《禮記》集解, antt. by Shen Xiaohuan and Wang Xingxian, Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1989

- LS *Liangshu* 梁書, 3 vols., by Yao Silian (姚思廉557-637), Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1973
- LSCQJS *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* 《呂氏春秋》校釋, by Lü Buwei (呂不韋d. 235 BCE), Chen Qiyong ed. & antt., Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1984
- LYZDWZ *Lieyi zhuan deng wuzhong* 《列異傳》等五種, ed. by Zheng Xuetao, Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988
- LYZY *Lunyu zhengyi* 《論語》正義, commt.by Liu Baonan, in ZZJC vol. 1
- LZJS *Laozi jiaoshi* 《老子》校釋, ed.& antt. by Zhu Qianzhi, Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 1984
- MHB *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* (4) 馬王堆漢墓帛書, Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 馬王堆漢墓帛書整理小組 ed., Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985
- MHSL *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律, T. 22, No. 1425, pp. 227a-549a
- MXJ *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記, a fifth century writing by Wang Yan (王琰 b. ca. 454), exists only in quotations.
- MZZY *Mengzi zhengyi* 《孟子》正義 commt. by Qiao Xun (焦循 1763-1820), in ZZJC, vol. 1
- MZXG *Mozi xiangu* 墨子閒詁, commt.by Sun Yirang (孫詒讓 1848-1908), in ZZJC, vol. 4
- NQS *Nanqi Shu* 南齊書, 3 vols., by Xiao Zixian (蕭子顯 483-537), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972
- NS *Nanshi* 南史, 6 vols., by Li Yanshou, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975
- QSGSDQHLCW *Quan shanggu Sandai Qinhan Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文, 4 vols., by Yan Kejun (嚴可鈞1753-1843) ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958
- SBBY *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju edition, 1927-36
- SBCK *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, Shanghai: Hanfenlou edition, 1926-36
- SFL *Sifen lü* 四分律, T. 22, No.1428, pp. 567b-1014b
- SFSZ *Shuofu sanzong* 《說郛》三種, 10 vols., comp. by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1360-68), Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988

- SGZ *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, 3 vols., by Chen Shou (陳壽 233-297), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984
- SJ *Shiji* 史記, 10 vols., by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. BCE 145-?), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962
- SJJZ *Shijing jinzhu* 《詩經》今註, antt. by Gao Heng, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980
- SSH *Suishu* 隋書, 6 vols., by Wei Zheng (魏徵 580-643), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973
- SS *Songshu* 宋書, 8vols., by Shen Yue (沈約 441-512), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974
- SSHJ *Soushen houji* 搜神後記, attr. Tao Yuanming (陶淵明 365-427), Wang Shaoying ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981
- SSJ *Soushen ji* 搜神記, by Gan Bao (干寶 fl. 317-320), Wang Shaoying ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979
- SSL *Shisong lü* 十誦律, T. 23, No. 1435, pp. 1a-470b
- SVEC Mark E Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990
- SWJZ *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, comp. by Xu Shen (許慎 d. ca. 120), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1963 of the 1873 edition
- SYSZ *Shuoyuan shuzheng* 《說苑》疏證, by Liu Xiang (劉向 ca. 77-6 BCE), Zhao Shanyi antt., Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1985
- TP *T'oung Pao*
- TPJHJ *Taiping jing hejiao* 太平經合校, Wang Ming ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960
- TPYL *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, 4 vols., ed. by Li Fang (李昉 925-966) et al., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960 reprint of 1935 Shangwu reprint of the Song edition
- TR *Taoist Resources*
- WFL *Mishasaibu hexi wufenlü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律, T. 22, No. 1421, pp. 1a-194b
- WS *Weishu* 魏書, 8 vols., by Wei Shou (魏收 506-572), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974
- WSEBF *Wushi-er bingfang: Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* 五十二病方——馬王堆漢墓帛書, Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 馬王堆漢墓帛書整理小組 ed., Beijing: Wewu chubanshe, 1979

- WX *Wenxuan* 文選, ed. by Xiao Tong (蕭統 501-31), Li Shan (李善 d. 689) antt., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974 photolithographic reprint of 宋淳熙八年 (1181) 尤袤刻本
- XGSZ *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, by Shi Daoxuan, T. 50, No. 2060, pp. 425a-707a
- XJZJ *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記, attr. to Ge Hong (葛洪 284-364), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985
- XL *Xinlun* 新論, by Huan Tan (桓譚 ca. 23BCE-56CE), in SBCK
- XZJJ *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解, antt. by Wang Xianqian (王先謙 1842-1918), in ZZJC, vol. 2
- YSJXJJ *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* 《顏氏家訓》集解, by Yan Zhitui (顏之推 531-590), Wang Liqi ed., Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980
- XXBQJ *Xiuxing benqi jing* 修行本起經, T.3, No. 184, pp. 461a-472b
- XXXZ *Xinxu xiangzhu* 《新序》詳註, by Liu Xiang, Zhao zhongyi antt., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997
- XYJ *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經, T. 4, No. 202, p. 349a-445a
- YML *Youming lu* 幽冥錄, by Liu Yiqing (劉義慶 403-444), Zheng Wanqing ed., Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988
- YY *Yiyuan* 異苑, comp. by Liu Jingshu (劉敬叔 fl.404), Fan Ning ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996
- ZAHI *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經, T. 1, No. 26, pp. 421a-809c
- ZFNCJ *Zhengfa nianchu jing* 正法念處經, T.17, No. 721, pp.1a-417c
- ZG *Zhengao* 真誥, by Tao Hongjing (陶弘景 452-536), DZ. vol. 637-640
- ZJ *Zhaijing* 齋經, T. 1, No. 87, pp. 910c-912a
- ZPYJ *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經, T. 4, No. 207, pp. 522b-531b
- ZS *Zhoushu* 周書, 3 vols., by Linghu Defen (令狐德棻 583-661), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971
- ZYLYYSJ *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 研究院歷史語言研究所集中刊
- ZZJC *Zhuji jicheng* 諸子集成, 8 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954

ZZJJ *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解, antt. by Wang Xianqian (王先謙 1842-1918), in ZZJC, vol. 3

INTRODUCTION

Chinese Buddhism is so named not only because it is Buddhism as practised in China, but also because it includes distinct Chinese beliefs and practices not present in other major Buddhist traditions also stemmed directly from Indian Buddhism (such as Theravada Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism). Although it may be an overstatement to say that we should treat ‘Chinese Buddhism as the legitimate, if not misunderstood, scion of Sinitic Culture’,¹ some traditions of mainstream Chinese Buddhism can be safely regarded as created by the Chinese under the inspiration of Indian Buddhist doctrines and beliefs. As examples of the creation, Buddhist vegetarianism, the custom of liberating animals, and the beliefs reinforcing the foresaid two practices deserve to be included.

These creations are actually practices and beliefs which illustrate the moral treatments of (i.e. mainly kindness towards) animals in early Chinese Buddhism, and they are the objectives of this study. They are selected, because they are among the features that differentiate Chinese Buddhist practices from those of other Buddhist traditions, and because the formations of such practices and beliefs may shed much light on the early Chinese understanding and hermeneutics of Buddhism.

The study first treats the early development of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism. Then, it addresses its similarly compassion-based practice of releasing animals. Finally, it analyses the moral beliefs in recompense and retribution which can well be viewed as doctrinal support for the two practices. The tradition of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism and the custom of liberating animals have received some attention in Chinese and Japanese scholarships. By and large, however, these studies are in need of advancement for four reasons. First of all, most of them are general studies that cover the whole history of Chinese Buddhism in the form of journal articles. As the time scale of the present study is limited to early Buddhist history in China, i.e. from the time Buddhism entered China up to the Sui Dynasty (隋朝 581-619), it aims to provide a more in-depth, if not

¹ Robert H Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), p. 2.

thorough, investigation of the subject. Secondly, all of the previous studies seem to have failed to consider the many sources provided by the Chinese translations of Buddhist texts. But a complete understanding of the formation of these practices can only be achieved by making thorough use of both Buddhist translations and secular Chinese texts, for such a study as the present one is primarily based on textual materials. Thirdly, with one or two exceptions, the previous studies seldom relate the practices in question to the Chinese cultural environment. The studies that attempted to do so did not succeed in identifying the exact indigenous cultural elements that had contributed to the development of the practices nor did it succeed in analysing the contribution of these elements. Fourthly, none of the previous studies have concluded that the combination of indigenous Chinese moral ideas and Buddhist moral beliefs were also responsible for the recognition and continuation of these practices in Chinese society.

The development of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism has been a special focus of the work of two scholars. The latest study was done by Yan Shangwen and deserves to be singled out. Yan tries to prove that the institutionalisation of vegetarianism for the Samgha (the community of Buddhist monks and nuns) was part of Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty's campaign to restore his control over the Samgha,² an idea elaborated upon in his book entitled, *Liang Wudi* 梁武帝.³ Such a view, however, greatly oversimplifies the process of the development of vegetarian practice and fails to recognize, among many factors, the general attitudes of the public towards the life of Buddhist monastics and the importance of the role played by the laity in that process. Nevertheless, the present study is indebted to Yan, and other scholars, for inspiration of their research and attempts to determine the nature of the tradition. Another work completed in 2008 has also partially dealt with the Emperor Wu, but I have not seen any newer materials than commonly known being used.⁴

The custom of liberating animals in Chinese Buddhism has been either treated or touched upon by some academic publications. The earliest

² Yan Shangwen, 'Liang Wudi de junquan sixiang yu pusa xingge chutan—yi Duan jiurou wen xingcheng de beijing weili' (*Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue lishi xuebao* 6, 1988), 11-36.

³ Yan Shangwen, *Liang Wudi* (Taiwan: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1999), chp. 6, pp. 228-254.

⁴ Tom De Rauw, 'Beyond Buddhist Apology: The Political Use of Buddhism by Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (r.502-549)'. PhD dissertation of Ghent Univeristy, 2008.

attempt was in a 19th century French article. It provides a general discussion of the custom that was in well practice in the Chinese Buddhist community back then. This study overlooked some important factors such as how the custom came to be. One of these factors was the precision in identifying canonical sources. What the author identified was a text whose translation time dated later than the earliest record on the activity of liberating animals. There are two other studies which also discuss the custom practised in the Ming dynasty.⁵ Obviously, they do not overlap with the concern of the present study in terms of the dynastic period covered. The most recent is the article written by Henry Shiu and Leah Stokes.⁶ This publication “suggests” two major issues. First of all, it is problematic to regard ‘animal release’ as a traditional Indian Buddhist practice. Secondly, the manner in which ‘animal release’ is currently performed raises environmental and ecological issues that are antithetical to the ritual’s intended cultivation of ‘compassion’. Their second issue is beyond what the current study concerns. As for the first issue, the authors have rightly pointed out that there is no evidence showing that the custom was a well-developed ritual of Indian Buddhism. However, they had not tried looking in the early Chinese Buddhist translations for passages that inspired Chinese invention and encouraged the practice. Instead, they relied on the scriptures suggested in some later and current general understanding of the custom.

The focal point of this study is kindness towards animals, a value that is represented by a couple of Buddhist ethical concepts and illustrated by popular Buddhist practices. Its structure consists of four chapters. Each chapter is organised in a similar pattern: an outline of beliefs and practices in Chinese culture which are similar or compatible with those presented in the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese within the period covered by this study is followed by discussions and analyses aimed to show how these practices and beliefs came to be transformed into new Buddhist cultures as a result of the encounter between Chinese and Indian Buddhist cultures. In Chapter One and Chapter Two, the two major ways to manifest Buddhist kindness towards animals—vegetarianism and the

⁵ See Yu Chun-fung, *Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-Hung & the Late Ming Synthesis*, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1981), and Joanna F. Handlin Smith, ‘Liberating Animals in Ming-Qing China: Buddhist Inspiration and Elite Imagination’ (*Journal of Asian Studies*, 58: 1, Feb.1999, p. 51-84).

⁶ See “Buddhist Animal Release Practices: Historic, Environmental, Public Health and Economic Concerns”.*Contemporary Buddhism*, 9:2, November, 2008, pp. 181-196.

custom of releasing animals, are discussed. It is natural to think that being kind to animals starts with not killing them. So, the first part of Chapter One is an investigation of how the Buddhist doctrine of non-killing inspired some Chinese emperors in their policies of prohibiting the blood sacrifice, a long-standing state ritual in Chinese civilisation. This is followed by a detailed examination of the formation of Buddhist vegetarian practices in the Chinese Buddhist community and an examination of how vegetarianism was codified as a monastic rule required to be observed by every member of the Orders of monks and nuns. Vegetarianism should be considered a tangible expression of showing kindness to animals, even if the intention in adopting a vegetarian diet in some cases is not love or compassion for animals. After all, even when a vegetarian diet is practised for the purpose of different Chinese fasts or when vegetarianism becomes a compulsory monastic rule, the act of restraining from eating meat still benefits animals in a practical way. Even more positive than restraining from eating meat is the action of setting animals free, the subject of the second chapter. If non-killing and vegetarianism are two passive rules benefitting the animals' welfare, then liberating animals is an active means of caring for them.

Chapter Three deals with the similarity and integration of the moral beliefs of the Chinese and the Indian Buddhist and demonstrates how the beliefs contributed to the establishment and spread of the two aforementioned practices. The discussions include brief descriptions of various stories meant to illustrate the moral beliefs and their influential effects on the Chinese culture during that time. This is deemed to be a window through which we see how some Chinese Buddhists interpreted the newly arrived foreign religious system—Buddhism.

Before ending this introductory note, I would like to include a few words about practical matters and the sources consulted for this study.

All of the Buddhist texts made use of in this study are Chinese translations for the obvious reason that only the Buddhist culture presented in the Chinese translations was studied and accepted by the Chinese. Thus, with a few exceptions in which cross references are made, no Buddhist canonical text in other languages has been consulted, and since the time scope of this research is confined to the period between the earliest history of Buddhism in China up to the Sui dynasty, the translations consulted are limited to those rendered no later than that dynasty.

All the Chinese Buddhist translations had been collected and printed in a form of canon from as early as the 10th century right up to current days. The widely used edition by today's academics is the eighty-five-volume *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* (大正新修大正藏, 'Taishō Canon: New Edition') that was edited under the direction of Takakusu Junjirō (高楠次郎 1866 -1945) and Watanabe Kaikyoku (渡邊海旭 1872-1933) and then published by Issaikyō Kankōkai in Tokyo from 1924 to 1932. For this study, the Taiwanese electronised edition which was made and has been continuously updated by the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association (中華電子佛典協會) is used. Although the main body of this edition is a modern and punctuated reprint of the 13th century Korean edition and therefore inevitably comes with the defects of the base edition as well as human errors made during reprinting, it is still used in this study for ease of reference. Besides, it is the only edition used and easily accessed by the international scholarly world of Buddhist studies. The canon is abbreviated as 'T', which is followed by the page numbers and section letters 'a', 'b', or 'c'.

Buddhist texts cited but not included in this edition came from the *Wan xuzang* (卍續藏 'Wan Sequel to the Canon'), which was originally called *Dainippon Zokuzōkyō* (大日本續藏經, edited in Zōkyōin in Tokyo during 1905 and 1912). The Xinwenfeng Publishing Company (新文豐公司) revised its catalogue and reprinted the whole collection in 1983. Here, it is abbreviated as 'XZ' and follows the same citation format as that of the Taishō Canon.

The Daoist canon consulted in this study is the Hanfenlou (涵芬樓) photo reprint of the Wanli 萬曆 period (1573-1619) edition of the *Zhengtong daoang* (正統道藏 *The Zhengtong Taoist Canon*). This reprint was made in Shanghai during 1923 and 1926 and in reference is shortened to 'DZ'. The sequence numbers from the Daoist texts stem from the Harvard Yanjing Index version. The format of the reference is as follows: DZ followed by sequence number, fascicle number, and leaf number which again followed by 'a' and 'b' to refer to each page of the leaf. This format is also used when referring to other Chinese texts published in the traditional fashion. Unless otherwise specified, references made to the texts which were discovered from the Dunhuang Caves follow the conventional marking used in the scholarly world.

Unless unavailable, all the traditional secular texts used are modern editions which are mainly published by the Zhonghua shuju (中华书局) in Beijing. The only reason for doing this is because the modern editions have fewer errors than their traditional prints. Unless otherwise indicated, the dynastic histories and other early texts are Zhonghua shuju editions. Most university and college journals in Mainland China are published in two different forms. One of these is for natural science, while the other is for humanities. In this study, all of the articles cited are from humanities journals. So, no further specification will be made to each reference.

The authenticity of the texts relies on the evidence of new studies, though if none exists, traditional attributed dates will be used. For Buddhist texts, Shi Sengyou's (釋僧祐 445-518) catalogue, the *Chu sanzang jiji* (出三藏記集 'collection of records on the making of the tripiṭaka', compiled between 510 and 518), will be used unless a translation was made after its compilation. Texts, such as *Soushen houji* (搜神後記 'later records of searching for the supernatural'), which is traditionally considered to have been composed by a Six Dynasties author, are not used in arguments where dates of composition or appearance are crucial.

The dating of the persons of the past follows three books: the *Zhongguo lidai renming dacidian* (中国历代人名大辞典) which contains information on Buddhists, the *Shishi yinian lu* (釋氏疑年錄) which concerns mainly Buddhist monks and nuns of imperial China, and the *Zhongguo fojiao renwu cidian* (中国佛教人物辞典). If dates are unavailable in these books, they are approximated according to other sources and the general time period in which the person in question was alive. The translation of imperial Chinese official titles follows Charles O. Hucker's work entitled, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, unless otherwise noted. With regards to the names of the Chinese monks and nuns, their common religious surname Shi (釋) is omitted after its first appearance, and only their given names are provided. For the sake of convenience, this study uses 'monastics' to mean 'members of the Saṃgha, including monks and nuns'.

The Chinese script is provided whenever appropriate. As for the characters, the simplified form is used only when listing modern studies in the Chinese language. For all other citations, traditional characters are

used. All Chinese characters are transliterated according to the *pinyin* system currently in use for mandarin Chinese.

CHAPTER ONE

GOVERNMENTAL PROHIBITIONS ON ANIMAL SACRIFICES

The fundamental form of Buddhist kindness towards animals is reflected in the spirit of non-killing. Unlike in imperial China where killing animals was only occasionally discouraged or prohibited,¹ abstaining from killing living creatures was one of the essential mental training rules for any Buddhist, regardless of his/her sectarian affiliation. In Chinese Buddhism, this act is carried out by prohibiting blood sacrifices and practising vegetarianism and started from its early history.

In ancient China sacrifices were always regarded as important as any other form of state affairs. Particularly since the establishment of the authority of Confucianism as a political ideology in the Western Han dynasty (西漢 202BCE-9CE), the two ancient practices of state ritual and ancestor worship, both of which involved blood sacrifice, had been continuously justified as governmental duties. Yet, from time to time even under such exclusive and stringent Confucian ruling institutions the principle of Buddhist non-killing managed to interrupt the actual practice of these rituals in some Chinese dynasties. The first few sections of this chapter investigate how these interruptions were made possible as well as how they took place. The remaining sections will scrutinise the development of vegetarianism in the early period of Chinese Buddhism. It

¹ For instance, according to a bamboo manuscript dated about 217 BCE, the first six days of a new year are assigned to the six domestic animals, and therefore they are not to be killed or eaten. For instance, on New Year's Day no chicken is supposed to be killed or eaten. See *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian* (Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu ed, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1978), pp. 192, 194. A record of this notion was also made in Dong Xun's (董勛 4th-5th cent.) *Wen lisu* (問禮俗 'enquiring about rituals and customs') as it is quoted in Zong Lin's (宗懷 ca.500-563) *Jingchu suishi ji* (荊楚歲時記 '[festival] days of the year in Jing and Chu'), *Jingchu suishi ji yizhu* (Tan Lin trsl. & ed., Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1985), pp. 25. The same norm is also recorded in the *Weishu* 104: 2325.

will also focus particularly on the contribution of indigenous Chinese vegetarian practices in regards to legitimisation and monastic institutionalisation of Buddhist vegetarianism.

1. Animal Sacrifice in Early China

The history of animal sacrifice in China began with the practices of god and ancestor worships. Material sources show that from as early as the Shang dynasty (1600-1027 BCE) sacrifice in China had played an important part in the religious activity of the state as well as of its ordinary people,² probably because it was ‘the principle method of approach to gods and ancestor spirits’.³ Sacrifice is mentioned by the fourth century BCE *Zuozhuan* (左傳) as one of the two national affairs of the people of the Shang and Zhou dynasties.⁴ According to Xun Kuang (荀況, 313-238 BCE), sacrifice is a means of commemorating one’s ancestors, a humanistic ritual to the elite, and a ghost-affair to the masses of the people.⁵ Confucians believed that sacrifice was the basis of ‘education and transformation’ (*jiaohua* 教化), one of the three duties for a filially pious son, and the paramount ritual of the central government.⁶

There were a variety of types of sacrifices in ancient China. Some of them, such as the sacrifice to the ancestors, *di* (禘 lit. ‘sacrifice’), and to Heaven which covers *jiao* (郊 lit. ‘outskirts’), *feng* (封 ‘sacrifice to Heaven’) and *shan* (禪 ‘sacrifice to Earth’), were only performed by the king/emperor.⁷ All of the other sacrifices were either performed by the local government on various occasions or by the common people in folk

² Terry F. Kleeman, ‘Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China’ (AM, 7:1, 1994), p. 188.

³ S.G.F. Brandon, ed. *Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, quoted in Kleeman, ‘Licentious Cults’, p. 185.

⁴ CQZZ chenggong13: 861. For sacrifices in Shang and Zhou, see Qin Jianwen, ‘Cong qingtong mingwen kan Shangzhou de jishi huodong’ (*Zhongguo wenzi xuebao* 1, 2003), at

<http://www.sinoss.com/portal/webgate/CmdArticleShow?articleID=781>, visited on Saturday, 6th March 2004.

⁵ XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) lilun13: 250.

⁶ LJJJ (jitong) 47: 1236-38, 1243.

⁷ Confucius is said to have made such a remark that anyone who knows the *jiao* and *di* sacrifices could rule a country as easily as watching his own palms. See *Zhongyong* (中庸 ‘golden means’), in *Sishu zhangju jizhu* (Zhu Xi 朱熹 1130-1200 ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983) 18: 27 and LJJJ (jitong) 47: 1249.

religious activities.⁸ In these sacrifices, receivers of offerings varied, too. They ranged from the most important, like ancestors and Heaven, to the least, like ghosts, the spirits of mountains, rivers, grains etc.⁹ From a very early time, heroes, be they cultural or military, had also been objects of sacrificial offerings. For instance, when Confucius was sanctified, the government and commoners alike offered sacrifices to him at a building called *wenmiao* (文廟 'culture temple').¹⁰ Hero figures such as the peasant rebellion leader, Chen Sheng, (陳勝, fl.209 BCE) at least until Sima Qian's (司馬遷 b. ca.145 BCE) time, received offerings at a shrine built specifically for him.¹¹ Numerous other recipients of sacrifice were deities worshipped in shrines, and just before the Later Han, there were so many such cult centres consuming animals that Wang Chong (王充, 27 CE-97) tried to restrict this activity by appealing for a reduction in the number of shrines.¹²

According to Confucius, vegetables were not good enough to be used as sacrificial material.¹³ What needed to be sacrificed was the flesh and blood of animals, although occasionally human beings were also used.¹⁴

⁸ Evan Morgan, 'Sacrifices in Ancient China' (*Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 70, 1939), p. 32. Ying Shao (應劭 ca. 140-204 CE) says that there were five state sacrifices, FSTYJS (dianli) 8: 291.

⁹ Arthur P. Wolf, 'Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors', in Arthur P. Wolf, ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 131-82; Kleeman, 'Licentious Cults', p. 188. A description of an ancestral sacrifice can be found in the *Shijing*, SJJZ xiaoyao-chuci 321-22. For evidence on the ancestor sacrifice in the Shang dynasty, see Edward L. Shaughnessy ed., *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts* (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1997), pp. 82-86.

¹⁰ Thomas A. Wilson, 'Sacrifice and the Imperial Cult of Confucius' (HR 41:3, 2002), pp. 251-52.

¹¹ SJ 48: 1961.

¹² LH (shuori)11: 173.

¹³ LJJJ (zaji) 42: 1125.

¹⁴ For studies on human sacrifice in ancient China, see Huang Zhanyue, 'Yinshang muzang zhong renxun rensheng de zai kaocha' (*Kaogu* 10, 1983), p. 935; Wu Tianming, 'Renxun chuzhong kao' (*Xibei di-er minzu xueyuan xuebao* 4, 2003), pp. 34-37; Liu He, 'Moja yu renxun' (*Dongbei shida xuebao* 4, 1983), p. 25. For short general discussions about this custom, see Wang Kelin, 'Shilun woguo renji he renxun de qiyuan' (*Wenwu* 2, 1982), p. 69; Gu Derong, 'Zhongguo gudai renxun rensheng zhe de shengfen shixi' (*Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 2, 1982), p. 112; Poo Mu-chou, 'Ideas Concerning Death and Burial in Pre-Han and Han China' (AM 3,

This prerequisite was, in fact, reflected in the formation of the early graphs for sacrificial-related activities. The graph *xie* (血 ‘blood’), for example, which is found in oracle bone inscriptions, was glossed by Xu Shen (許慎 d. ca. 120) in his *Shuowen jiezi* (說文解字 ‘explaining phrases and analysing words’) as ‘the blood of victim animals offered during sacrifice’.¹⁵ Accordingly, animal sacrifice was called *xueshi* (血食 ‘blood victuals’). Since there existed in ancient Chinese society a basic social classification of the people, materials used in sacrifices were also differentiated according to the social status of the individual performer.¹⁶ This is to say that the size of the animal used in sacrifice corresponded to the social status of the sacrificer; the higher his social esteem, the bigger the size.

Hence, it is clear that the term sacrifice in pre-modern China referred to the sacrifice of animals in most dynasties. The few exceptional dynasties in which animal sacrifice was partially or completely banned were those in which Buddhism exerted its powerful influence on the ruling houses. Buddhism is an Indian religion that, since its inception, absolutely opposes animal sacrifices sanctioned by Brahmanism, a tradition much older than Buddhism itself. To see how Buddhism caused the prohibition of the use of animals in sacrifice, a summary of Buddhist views on the killing of animals is in order.

2. Buddhist Views on the Killing of Animals

The doctrine of loving-kindness (*maitri* 慈) and compassion (*karuṇā* 悲) is very much emphasised in both pre-Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions and Mahāyāna Buddhism which includes Tantric Buddhism.¹⁷ It is regarded by

part II, 1990), p. 25; Yang Shi, ‘Mingdai renxun qiantan’ (*Yandu* 6, 1987), p. 43; Mou Xiaodong, ‘Qingchu de yiren xunzang’ (*Wenshi zhishi* 7, 1987), pp. 60-64; Qiu Xigui (Vernon K. Fowler trsl.), ‘On the Burning of Human Victims and the Fashioning of Clay Dragons in Order to Seek Rain as Seen in the Shang Dynasty Oracle-Bone Inscriptions’ (*Early China* 1983-85), pp. 290-92, 297-303.

¹⁵ SWJZ 5B: 105a; Roel Sterckx, ADEC, p. 76.

¹⁶ Some primary sources on this hierarchic regulation are listed in Li Jinglin’s ‘Rujia de sangji lilun yu zhongji guanhuai’ (*Zhongguo shehui kexue*, 2, 2004), p. 111.

¹⁷ For a general study on the development of compassion from early Buddhism to Mahāyāna, see Kenneth K. Inada, ‘The Nature of Buddhist Compassion (*karuṇā*)’, in Kuala Lumpur Dharmmajoti et al. eds., *Recent Researches in Buddhist Studies: Essays in Honour of Professor Karunadasa* (Colombo, 1997), pp. 367-77.

a scholar to be one of Buddhism's supreme values.¹⁸ Yet, between these two forms of Buddhism, there is a difference of degree in relation to the term 'compassion': it is actually 'kindness' in the former, more of an altruistic attitude towards others' welfare in the latter.¹⁹ However, generally speaking, in both cases its basic function is rather of consequentialism as it is practised to perfect the practitioner's religious goal: *arhat* (one who has laid down the burden) for the former and Buddhahood for the latter. The pre-Mahāyāna spirit of compassion is one basic reason for the Buddhist teaching of 'non-violence' (*ahiṃsā*)²⁰ and the introduction of the 'Four Boundlessnesses' meditation.²¹ Non-violence

¹⁸ Richard Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 2002 reprint of 1988), p. 88. As an authority on Theravada Buddhism, Professor Gombrich also argues that 'it was the Buddha who introduced love and compassion into Indian religion,' and that kindness is a means to attain Nirvana. See his 'Kindness and Compassion as Means to Nirvana in Early Buddhism', p.1, <http://www.ocbs.org/content/view/61/121/>, visited on Sunday, April 11, 2010.

¹⁹ For a detailed study on compassion in the Theravada tradition, see Harvey. B. Aronson, *Love and Sympathy in Theravāda Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980. For an understanding of Mahāyāna compassion, see John B. Noss, 'Mutual Love in Mahayana Buddhism', *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Apr., 1952), pp. 84-89.

²⁰ There are at least three views on the origins of 'non-violence' (*ahiṃsā*): it originated in the Indus Valley civilization, the Śramaṇa tradition, and in the Vedic tradition of Brahmanism. For a brief summary of these three and a supportive argument for the last one, see Herman W. Tull, 'The Killing that is not Killing: Man, Cattle, and the Origins of Non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) in the Vedic Sacrifice' (*Indo-Iranian Journal*, 39, 1996), pp. 223-244. Martin Kovan, 'Violence and (Non-)resistance: Buddhist *Ahiṃsā* and its Existential Aporias', *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 16, 2009, pp. 40-68. Yet, recently, anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere suggests that it was due to the objection of Śramaṇa groups to killing that not long after the Buddha's time a certain Gautama, presumably belonging to Brahmin society, posited the doctrine of non-violence. See his *Imagining Karma: Ethical Transformation in Amerindian, Buddhist, and Greek Rebirth* (London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 91. Cf. Jan E. M. Houben, 'The Vedic Horse-sacrifice and the Changing Use of the Term *ahiṃsā*: An Early Insertion in TB 3.9.8?' *Studia Orientalia*, 94, 2001, pp. 279-90. Still, there are scholars who maintain that this concept is one of the contributions made by the Jain tradition to the world's religiosity. See Christopher Key Chapple, ed., *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*, Cambridge, Mass: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, 2002; Tara Sethia ed., *Ahiṃsā, Anekānta and Jainism*, Lala, S. L. Jain Research Series, vol. 21, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004.

²¹ The four boundless meditations are a set of contemplations which requires the practitioner to extend his four thoughts of compassion, loving-kindness, joy and

in Buddhism, being one of the starting points of the Buddha to refute traditional Brahmanism, is as important as its characteristic teaching of ‘non-self’. In effect, its importance can often be seen as the Buddha emphasizes this in his discourses and in the laying down of one of the principal disciplinary rules for all Buddhists—the rule of non-killing. In his discourses, the Buddha seems to condemn violence often either by pointing out its deterministic unfortunate and unpleasant consequences, such as the suffering that awaits the moral wrong-doers in their future lives in the realms of hell and animals, or by saying that non-violence leads to a fortunate and happy rebirth. For instance, he says that killing living beings will cause one to be reborn in a hot or screaming hell.²² He also states that by abstaining and preventing the mind from even thinking about killing consequently contributes to happiness in both this life as well as a rebirth in heaven.²³ His most often quoted saying that can be found in both Pali and Chinese sources is, “laying aside the stick and the sword, he dwells with compassion and kindness to all living creatures.”²⁴ The one possible rationale for non-violence in Buddhism appears to have been achieved by putting one’s feet in others’ shoes for we are also told in the well-circulated *Dharmapada* (‘words of the doctrines’) that “all tremble at

equity to every living being in the universe. This teaching can be found in many sūtras, early as well as later ones: *Fo kaijie fanzhi aba jing* (佛開解梵志阿毘經, translator unknown), T. 1, p. 261a; *Yuedeng sanmei jing* (月燈三昧經, translator unknown), T. 15, pp. 612a, 614c, 615b; ZAHJ, T. 2, p. 344c; *Ji yiqie fude sanmei jing* (集一切福德三昧經, translator unclear), T. 12, p. 991b; *Wumen chanjing yaofa* (五門禪經要用法 trsl. by Dharmamitra 曇摩蜜多 fl. 424-443), T.15, p. 331a, etc. It has been suggested that the Buddhist technique of the four boundless meditations is an alternative to the way of uniting with Brahṃā in the Upaniṣads. Richard. F. Gombrich, *New Discoveries of Buddhism* (a speech given on the seminar commemorating Ven. Saddhātissa on 14th Fabr, 2004, in a London Sri Lankan vihara).

²² “於此賢聖所，輕心起非義，及殺害眾生，墮斯熱地獄。” (ZAHJ, T. 2, p. 341a), and “瞋患懷毒害，殺生血污手，造諸雜惡行，墮叫喚地獄。” (CAHJ, T.1, p. 125a). Even more horrifying consequences are described in detail in the *Fo wei Shoujia zhangzhe shuo yebao chabie jing* (佛為首迦長者說業報差別經, T. 1, p. 891, cf. The first fascicle of the *Fenbie shan-e baoying jing* 分別善惡報應經 T. 1, No. 81, pp. 895b-901b).

²³ ZAHJ, T. 2, p273b, 357b, cf. FJJ, T. 4, p. 565b.

²⁴ “灭杀除杀，舍于刀杖，怀惭愧心，慈悯一切。”CAHJ, T.1, p. 88c; D.i.4, Sn. 394.

violence, all fear death. Comparing oneself with others, one should neither kill nor cause one to kill.”²⁵

As a rule, ‘abstaining from taking life’ is in the gravest category of all disciplinary rules for monks and nuns and second only to the rule of ‘abstaining from having any sexual relations with others’.²⁶ An even greater importance of this rule can be viewed in the cases of lay practitioners and monastic novices: for them, the foremost prohibition is not to take the life of a living being.²⁷ According to this rule, any form of killing is prohibited: from the basic sense of taking other beings’ lives by any means, to suicide. Furthermore, it is not only limited to the human species but to animals and plants as well.²⁸ It is also partly for preserving the spirit of this rule that the Buddha prescribed his disciples to retreat during the rainy season when insects and worms were breeding and use strainers when taking drinking water.²⁹ Under normal circumstances, monks and nuns were also prohibited

²⁵ “一切皆懼死，莫不畏杖痛，恕己可為譬，勿殺勿行杖。” FJJ, T. 4, p. 565a; Dh. 129-130.

²⁶ Five Vinaya versions belonging to different Buddhist schools are preserved in Chinese. As far as concerns the non-killing rule, every version places the same importance to it. For novice the non-killing precept comes first among the five main rules, e.g. T. 22, p. 116c.

²⁷ *Zhongshifen apitan lun* (眾事分阿毘曇論, no later than 6th cent, translator unknown) T. 26, p. 663a; *Shelifu apitan lun* (舍利弗阿毘曇論, trsl. by 曇摩崛多 and 曇摩耶舍 during 414-15) T. 28, pp. 574a, 583b. Almost in the same time or slightly later, Vinaya texts specifically designed for the laity was also translated: *Foshuo youposai wujie xiang jing* (佛說優婆塞五戒相經, trsl. by Gunavarman 求那跋摩 after 431) T. 24, No. 1476; the *Youposai jiejing* (優婆塞戒經 trsl. by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 385-433 in 428) T. 24, No. 1488.

²⁸ According to the Vinaya, the punishment for setting a trap to kill animals is the same as that for killing a human, which means that the killer is expelled from the Saṃgha (T. 22, pp. 9a, 41c, 58b, 143b; *Da zhuangyan lunjing* [大莊嚴論經, translator unknown] T. 4, pp. 268c-269c; T. 22, p. 77c, etc). But before the formulation of this rule, strangely enough, a monk was found killing animals, MHSL, T. 22, pp. 485c-6a; cf. E. Washburn Hopkins, ‘The Buddhistic Rule Against Eating Meat’ (JAOS, 27, 1906), p. 457.

²⁹ T. 22, p. 45a; T. 23, p. 284c, etc. For the rule regarding using strainers, see, T. 22, p. 129a; T. 22, pp. 144c, 145a; ZAHJ, T. 2, p. 493a-b. For an example of the Buddha’s deep concern for organisms in the water, see the story in T. 2, p. 493a-b. Damien Keown, remarks that this rule might have been a result of the Jain influence but he does not seem to have any evidence to support this view. See his *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.15.

from using animal products.³⁰ However, there is an exception: if a monk lives in a place where the weather is very cold and harsh, he is allowed to use animal skin to make shoes. Even with this exception, yet another exception follows, which is that the following ten kinds of animals can not be consumed: lion, tiger, leopard, otter, cat, elephant, horse, dog, fox, and black deer.³¹

The question of how the rule of non-killing is directly conducive to the religious goal of enlightenment was answered by the Buddha on a number of occasions. Almost all the translations of earlier versions of the account about the Buddha's demise agree in stating that the Buddha at his deathbed told his disciples that they should respect and value the *vinaya* (monastic disciplinary rules) as well as the *sūtras* (scriptures containing the discourses of the Buddha and the preaching of his chief disciples sanctioned by him), as they would be their teacher after his death.³² In one text, the *vinaya* is regarded as the foundation of religious emancipation, because it is on the basis of the *vinaya* that one-pointedness concentration is generated. One-pointedness concentration, again, produces the final salvation-obtaining wisdom.³³ This is exactly how the general tradition of Buddhist practice is

³⁰ MHSL, T. 22, p. 488c. There are exceptions to this rule. For instance, to cure a certain disease, a monk is permitted to drink fresh blood of a bull, SFL, T. 22, p. 868b.

³¹ SSL, T. 23, p. 286c; WFL, T. 22, pp. 146c, 147a. In Theravada scriptures, there are stories showing the ecological concern and proto-scientific observation of animal behaviours, and although prohibiting from using animal skins, there is also a story about the Buddha who, in a previous life, gave a great number of animal skins to others as gifts. See Deleanu, 'Buddhist Ecology', p. 89.

³² See for instance, *Fo ban nihuan jing* (佛般泥洹經 perhaps was translated by Zhu Fahu 竺法護 i.e. Dharmarakṣa 229-306), T. 1, p. 172b; the *Ban nihuan jing* (般泥洹經 could have been translated by Zhi Qian 支謙 fl.ca 220), T. 1, p. 188a; the *Fo chui banniepan lüeshuo jiaojie jing* (佛垂般涅槃略說教誡經 trsl. by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 344-413 between 401 and 413), T. 12, p. 1110c; the *Chang ahan jing* (trsl. by Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 in 413), T. 1, p. 26a; the Theravada Vinaya referred in the *Shanjianlū piposha* (善見律毘婆沙 trsl. by Saṃghabhadra 僧伽跋陀羅 in 492), T. 24, p. 786a; the FSDBNPJ T. 1, p. 204b-c; *Fo suoxing zan* (佛所行讚, trsl. by Shi Baoyun 釋寶雲, d. 449), T. 4, p. 48a; etc.

³³ T. 12, p. 1111a. A similar idea also occurs in the DFBFBEJ (T. 3, p. 158c. This sūtra was depicted in wall paintings found in at least two places in China. See Hu Wenhe, 'Dazu Baoding he Dunhuang de Da fangbian fo bao-en jingbian zhi bijiao yanjiu', *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1, 1996, pp. 35-42, 184). In a short sermon of the ZAHJ

represented in another text which states the sequence of undertakings is morality, meditation, and wisdom.³⁴ In fact, in many *sūtras*, the reason for cultivating *pratimokṣa* (波羅提木叉 ‘release from all afflictions’), which is sometimes taken as a substitute for the word *vinaya* in a few Chinese translations, is normally believed to exist in order to prepare the practitioner with the heart of kindness that is required for meditation.³⁵ Apart from this explanation, there is in effect a meditation practice designated as the ‘Four Boundlessnesses’ which develops the four ‘divine states’ of mind—kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Scriptures specifically devoted to expounding the technique of this meditation are better preserved in the Pāli canon.³⁶ It is with this meditation that the spirit of loving-kindness and compassion is employed and emphasised by the Buddha as a means of self-protection for the forest monks.³⁷

If the pre-Mahāyāna doctrine of compassion appears to be self-interested on the practitioner’s part, that of the Mahāyāna tradition is clearly self-sacrificial altruism. There, the spirit of compassion is advocated both in the context of discussing the doctrine of non-killing and in the separate expositions on compassion itself. The emphasis on non-killing was first enhanced in the Mahāyāna version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (i.e. *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經) which considers sixteen deeds to be morally bad. Most of the sixteen deeds are related to the keeping, trading, and killing of domestic animals.³⁸ In order to stress the principle of

(T. 2, p. 211c), the Buddha tells his disciples that Vinaya rules can lead to emancipation alone.

³⁴ *Chang ahan jing*, T. 1, p. 17b.

³⁵ The observation of the eight-fold fast is regarded by the seven groups of Buddhists as a set independent of all other observations (DFBFBEJ T. 3, p. 159c). The term *pratimokṣa* has been understood to mean metaphorically ‘purgative’. See Richard Gombrich, ‘Pātimokkha: purgative’, in Sodō Mori et al, *Bukkyō bungaku ronshū* (Tōkyō: Sankibo Busshorin, 1991), pp. 31-37.

³⁶ *Tevijja-Sutta*, D.XIII; and the *Metta-Sutta*, in *Sutta-nipata* (Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith eds., Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1990), pp. 25-26. For Chinese translation of the former see, CAHJ, T. 1, pp.104c-107a.

³⁷ C. Nyānasatta Thera, ‘The Buddha’s Discourse on Loving-Kindness’ (the *Maha Bodhi*, June 1958), pp. 196; Florin Deleanu, ‘Buddhist “Ethology” in the Pāli Canon: Between Symbol and Observation’ (*The Eastern Buddhist* 32: 2, 2000), p. 84. For examples of this technique, see the story of Bodhisattva Pushi who time and time again uses compassion meditation to conquer poisonous snakes, LDJJ, T. 3, pp. 4a-5a.

³⁸ T. 12, p. 538b. These sixteen become twelve in the *Za apitan xinlun* (T. 28, p. 890b). Ironically, also in this version of the *Niepan jing*, the Buddha is made to

compassion, another Mahāyāna text even states that all Buddhas walk four inches above the ground, so that as to not tread on insects and worms.³⁹ Again, Mahāyāna Buddhists attach great importance to charity and make acts of giving the first of the six recommended admirable deeds. A Bodhisattva (one who is aspired to seek Buddhahood) is supposed to give whatever others need or ask for, including his body. However, in a sūtra, which is mainly about the prescribed deeds of a Bodhisattva, the Buddha advises the aspiring Bodhisattva that he should not give anything that can be used for killing beings, nor should he teach others how to hunt and so forth.⁴⁰ In fact, in another text, non-killing is called by the Buddha the greatest giving, although the term ‘giving’ is not used in its dictionary sense.⁴¹ Finally, the recurring popular story of a Bodhisattva who feeds a hungry tiger with his own body is a true example of Bodhisattva altruism driven by ultimate compassion,⁴² and the story of a monk who risks his life

repeat a biased attitude that killing a person who has no faith in Buddhism will incur no sin, T. 12, pp. 460b, 562b, 702c, 808c.

³⁹ CGDJ, T. 15, p. 452c; FGL, T. 25, p. 35c. The latter translation is included in the Āgama division of the canon by the author of the LDSBJ (T. 49, p. 120a), who ascribes this text to an unknown translator of the Later Han. This was followed by the editors of the Taishō edition. Based on Sengyou’s information that this text was a commentary on the *Zengyi ahan jing* and on some similarities in wording between these two texts, the author of the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (開元釋教錄, co. by Shi Zhisheng 釋智昇, 669-740,) suggests that it may have been translated by the same person who translated the *Zengyi ahan jing* (trsl. by Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 fl. 384-413, T. 55, p. 621b). In passing, Zhisheng also mentioned that an older catalogue had attributed it to the Western Jin translator Zhu Fahu. A new preliminary linguistic study of the text shows that the translation may be made no earlier than the Sanguo period. See Fang Yixin & Gao Lieguo, ‘*Fenbie gongde lun fanyi niandai chutan*’ (*Zhejiang daxue xuebao* 33: 5, 2003), pp. 92-99. The text was recorded as *Fenbie gongde jing* by Sengyou who classified it under the category of ‘newly collected miscellaneous translations by unknown translators’ (T. 55, p. 21c). On the basis of his own understanding that the text is included in the newly collected section of Sengyou’s catalogue, Sodō Mori considers the text to be translated after Shi Dao-an’s (釋道安) death in 386 but before 498. See his ‘On the Fēn-bié-gōng-dé-lùn (分別功德論)’ (*Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 19:1, 1970), p. 33.

⁴⁰ *Pusa dichi jing* (菩薩地持經 trsl. by Dharmakṣema before 419), T. 30, p. 906c.

⁴¹ T. 4, p. 301b; *Zhongjing zhuan zapiyu* (眾經撰雜譬喻, unknown), T. 4, p. 533b-c; CYJ (出曜經 trsl. by Zhu Fonian before 385), T. 4, p. 675a.

⁴² This story can be found in many Chinese Buddhist translations: e.g. LDJJ, T. 3, 2b; FGL, T. 25, p. 35b. A similar story tells of a Bodhisattva king who cuts his flesh to feed a falcon in order to save the life of a pigeon. See LDJJ, T. 3, p. 1b-c.

in order to protect the life of a goose should be seen as a realistic example of compassionate act in Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁴³

Of course, as time went by, newly formulated texts put greater stress on the importance of non-killing and compassion. Seen from an elaborate and somewhat different perspective, killing and non-killing came to be associated with the belief in karmic retribution and recompense. This new development will be demonstrated with stories in the third chapter of this study.

Given that he advocated the above values and doctrines, the Buddha, of course, regarded animal sacrifice as wrong and seriously condemned human sacrifice.⁴⁴ Performing sacrifices was a privilege of the Brahmins in ancient India. They did it 'for goods in both this life and the next, for progeny and prosperity on earth and a place with the ancestors in heaven.'⁴⁵ Yet, the Buddha and other ascetic groups objected to this practice on the grounds that it involved the killing of sentient beings. It is stated in some Buddhists texts that Brahmins normally told the rulers and common people alike that they should make animal sacrifices to the gods so natural disasters can be prevented from befalling.⁴⁶ However, in another text the Buddha says that all those who kill animals for sacrificing to the

In fact quite a few stories of this text illustrate the Bodhisattva's spirit of self-sacrifice.

⁴³ It is said that a monk went to a householder for a meal. Having let the monk sit down, the host, who was arranging pearls for the king, went inside and prepared food. When he came out, he noticed one pearl was missing. Thus he started to scold the monk. The monk kept telling him he was not a thief, but the host was so furious that he beat up the monk. The monk was bleeding, and a goose came along to lick the blood. The host hit the goose as well. As a result, the goose died. At that point the monk became very sad. The host asked him why he grieved over the goose, the monk told him the truth. It turned out that it was the goose that picked up and swallowed the pearl, and the monk kept silent all the time just for protecting the goose. *Da zhuangyan lun*, T. 4, pp. 319a-320c.

⁴⁴ In the *Faju piyu jing* (法句譬喻經, 'sūtra of stories on the verses of the Dharma' trsl. by Faju 法炬 and Fali 法立 before 307. T. 4, p. 601b-c) a story tells how the Buddha rescued the seven men who were about to be killed in a rain-seeking sacrifice. The same practice for a different purpose can be seen in the *Za piyu jing* (雜譬喻經, unknown translator. T. 4, p. 503c).

⁴⁵ Richard Gombrich, *How Buddhism Began*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2002), p. 95.

⁴⁶ *Faju piyu jing*, T. 4, pp. 581c-2a; *Fo suoxing zan*, T. 4, p. 22a; *Foshuo chu kong zhai huan jing* (佛說除恐災患經, translator unknown), T. 17, p. 552a.

gods with the intention of getting rid of plagues will bring about the exact opposite results— disasters such as drought and plagues.⁴⁷ Similar disasters could also be caused by hunting and fishing.⁴⁸ Above all, there is a scripture specifically preached on the topic of animal sacrifices. In it, the Buddha severely criticises animal sacrifices and praises the use of oil, butter, and molasses in sacrifices instead.⁴⁹ The Buddha is reported in another scripture to have said that animal sacrifices could not bring any blessings just as planting the seed of one kind of tree could not result in the growth of a different species of tree.⁵⁰ What is more, animal sacrifices are considered harmful to the facilitator. In a sermon included in the *Za ahan jing* (雜阿含經 *Samyutāgama* ‘miscellaneous sūtras of the tradition’), a young Brahmin asks the Buddha if he approves of animal sacrificial rituals. The Buddha answers in a blunt negative for he believes that all ritual killing would bring dire consequences on the performers.⁵¹ In another similar sermon, the Buddha gives a detailed reason as to why animal sacrifice is dangerous.⁵² In one humorous episode quoted in the *Da zhidu lun* (大智度論 ‘treatise on great perfection of wisdom’), the author of the text ridicules a Brahmin who holds that there is no sin in killing goats and eating their meat.⁵³ An even more serious ridicule is found in another sūtra which explains that animal sacrifices are done because Brahmins want to eat meat, but they do not want to have the sin incurred from killing. So, they plot to have animals killed in sacrifices.⁵⁴

Both the principle of non-killing and the prohibition of animal sacrifice seem to have influenced Emperor Aśoka (fl. 268-239 BCE); this is reflected in his edicts in which non-killing is referred to as *avihiṃsā*. In Rock Edict (RE) I a sentence reads, ‘Here no living creature must be killed and sacrificed,’ and in RE III, ‘Abstention from killing animals is

⁴⁷ *Foshuo chu kong zai huan jing*, T. 17, p. 552a. Those performing the sacrifice will be reborn into three unwholesome realms: those of animals, the hungry ghosts and hells. See *Foshuo guanding qiwan erqian shenwang hu biqiu zhoujing* (佛說灌頂七萬二千神王護比丘咒經, see appendix), T.21, pp. 512c-536b.

⁴⁸ *Foshuo anan sishi jing* (佛說阿難四事經, translator unknown), T. 14, p. 757b; T. 21, p. 521a.

⁴⁹ See CAHJ, T.1.pp.96c-101b

⁵⁰ *Youposai jiejing*, T. 24, p. 1059c.

⁵¹ T. 2, p. 22c.

⁵² T. 2, pp. 24b-25c; *Zhong benqiu jing*, T. 4, 152b

⁵³ JLYX quotes from the DZDL, T. 53, pp. 10c-11a.

⁵⁴ *Shetou jian taizi ershiba xiu jing* (舍頭諫太子二十八宿經, i.e. *Hu-er jing* 虎耳經, translator unknown) T. 21, p. 412b-c.

meritorious.’ Again, in Pillar Edict (PE) VII a passage reads, ‘The progress of morality has been promoted (because it leads) to abstention from hurting living beings (and) to abstention from killing animals.’⁵⁵ In RE IV and RE XI there are passages that can be translated as ‘there are now promoted... abstention from killing animals, abstention from hurting living beings’. PE V contains a long list of animals which the emperor had made inviolable and therefore forbidden to kill.⁵⁶ Although scholars believe the nature of Aśoka’s *avihimsā* to be closer to Jainism than to Buddhism because there exist parallels between his lists of protected animals and those in Jain texts,⁵⁷ the preceding survey shows that Buddhists had both incorporated the abstention from killing animals into their scriptures as well as elaborated upon it in extreme measures.

3. Edicts Prohibiting Animal Sacrifices and Killing Animals during the 5th-7th Centuries

Had the doctrines of non-killing, loving-kindness and compassion highlighted above presented society with an influential message, the policies of Aśoka might have found their way into later Buddhist texts. Non-killing was even known as a feature of Buddhism by the Chinese who went west. In the *Xiyu zhuan* (西域傳 ‘records of the west regions’) section of the *Houhan shu* (後漢書 ‘book of the Later Han’), the author included Ban Yong’s (班勇 fl. 102-126) report to the Chinese government ‘that the Indians follow Buddhism, and in particular, do not engage in killing’.⁵⁸ About two decades later, among the earliest Buddhist teachings transmitted to China, there was the principle of non-killing along with four other principal precepts of conduct, which were supposed to be observed mainly by the lay practitioners and novices.⁵⁹ This rule was soon noticed

⁵⁵ The translation of the edicts quoted here are K. R. Norman’s. See his ‘Aśoka and Capital Punishment’ (*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1975), p. 16.

⁵⁶ Radhagovinda Basak ed., *Aśokan Inscriptions* (Calcutta: Progressive Publisher, 1959), p. 103.

⁵⁷ K. R. Norman, ‘Buddhism and Aśoka’ in his *A Philological Approach to Buddhism* (The Buddhist Forum V, London: the School of Oriental and African Studies, 1997), p. 117.

⁵⁸ HHS 88: 2921-22. Cf. *Houhan ji jiaozhu* (Zhou Tianyou ed., Tianji guji chubanshe, 1987) 10: 276.

⁵⁹ *Foshuo qichu sanguang jing* (佛說七處三觀經, trsl. by An Shigao 2nd CE in China,), T. 2, p. 880c. The same passage is also found in the *Foshuo jiuhe jing*,

in imperial court: in his memorial submitted to Emperor Xiang Kai (襄楷 fl.166), it states that Buddhism ‘loves beings to live and hates them to die (好生惡殺)’.⁶⁰ Soon after Xiang Kai’s memorial, texts that discouraged people from making animal sacrifice began to be translated into Chinese. For instance, the *Chengju guangming dingyi jing* (成具光明定意經, ‘sūtra of achieving the bright light concentration’, also known as *Chengju guangming jing* 成具光明經 and *Chengju guangming sanmei jing* 成具光明三昧經, trsl. by Zhi Yao 支曜, fl. ca. 184-89),⁶¹ and the *Zhong benqi jing* (中本起經, ‘medium [size] sūtra on the rise [of the Buddha]’, co-trsl. by Tanguo and Kang Mengxiang 曇果共康孟詳, in ca. 207) both in no uncertain terms prohibit the killing of living beings for sacrificial purposes.⁶² The doctrine was strengthened by the sequential appearance of later Buddhist translations which are too many to mention here.

Above, we saw that blood sacrifices were performed in both the state ritual and popular cults of ancient China.⁶³ Of all the killing involved in those traditional practices, none but human sacrifice and human burial were opposed by Confucius, both of which were finally banned in 383 BCE by the state of Qin (秦), though not completely successful for even in the Han dynasty human sacrifice was still practised by the Ba tribe of a south-western province.⁶⁴ There is no clear evidence showing that animal sacrifice was prohibited in early China. Although the *Lüshi chunqiu* (呂氏

T. 2, p. 883b and the *Achu foguo jing* (阿閼佛國經 trsl. by 支識 i.e. Lokakṣema, in China ca. 167-189), T. 11, p. 752a.

⁶⁰ HHS 30B: 1075, 1082, 88: 2921. The exact phrase was used by Confucius to speak of Chinese ancient sage-rulers, XZJJ (ZZJC, vol. 2) aigong 20: 356.

⁶¹ Although there seems to be no problem with its date, the provenance of this text has recently been questioned. See Jan Nattier, ‘The Ten Epithets of the Buddha in the Translations of Zhi Qian 支謙’ (*Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2002*, no. 6, 2003), pp. 207-250. This issue is discussed in my ‘Notes on the *Chengju guangming dingyi jing*’, *Buddhist Studies Review*, 25:1, 2008, pp. 27-53. For Nattier’s response to my view see her *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations: Texts from the Earliest Han 東漢 and the Three Kingdoms 三國 Periods* (The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2008), p. 100.

⁶² T. 15, p. 541b; T. 4, p. 152b.

⁶³ There is also evidence showing that some popular cults did not involve killing animals. E. g. SSJ 4: 52.

⁶⁴ HHS 86: 2840.

春秋, by Lü Buwei 呂不韋, d. 235 BCE) indicates that the legendary Emperor Shen Nong (神農, 'divine husbandman') was the first to condemn those who ruled a country through sacrifice, blood oaths and warfare,⁶⁵ this does not clearly show that he had suggested that animal sacrifices should be banned. On the one hand, Confucians denied that excessive sacrifices can bring blessings and were quick to condemn extravagant offerings, but on the other hand, they never abandoned the tradition of animal sacrifice in state rituals.⁶⁶ According to a few official histories, from time to time there had been occasions on which some Confucian literati criticised the practice of excessive sacrifice (i.e. *yinsi* 淫祀), which were meant to mainly refer to sacrifices in local cults; sometimes, the government reluctantly banned these local cults, but state sacrifices were never questioned before the Six Dynasties.⁶⁷

3.1. Criticisms of Blood Sacrifice

The exact point at which the Chinese public started to take up an anti-animal-sacrifice attitude cannot be ascertained, but a full awareness of the Buddhist precept against killing is clearly documented in a fourth century Buddhist manual composed by a lay Buddhist and for the Buddhist laity. The manual is called *Fengfa yao* (奉法要, 'essentials for observers of the Dharma') and was written by Xi Chao (郗超, 336-377), a high-ranking official of the Eastern Jin dynasty (東晉 317-420). Xi systematically discusses what and how the five basic precepts should be observed.

Outside the Buddhist circle, as with other factors related to the early influence of Buddhism, it appears that practitioners of Daoism⁶⁸ were

⁶⁵ LSCQJS (chenglian)12: 633-34.

⁶⁶ Kleeman, 'Licentious Cults', p. 204.

⁶⁷ HS 12: 351, 25A: 1194; HHS 41: 1411; SGZ 1: 4, 12: 388, 24: 678, 27: 740, 52: 1229. An interesting story tells of a ghost who took revenge on a Jin official who banned licentious sacrifice. One version of this story can be seen in the *Pei Qi yulin* (Zhou Lengqie ed., Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988), p. 49.

⁶⁸ By 'Daoism', occasionally 'institutional Daoism', it is meant generally all those Daoist religious groups starting from the Late Han Zhang Ling to the major Daoist branches of the Six Dynasties. For a brief study of the medieval history of Daoism, see Kobayashi Masayoshi, 'The Establishment of the Taoist Religion (Tao-chiao) and Its Structure' (*Acta Asiatica*, 1995, 68) pp. 19-36; also Maeda Shigeki, 'The Evolution of the Way of the Celestial Master: Its Early View of Divinities' (*Acta Asiatica*, 1995, 68), pp. 54-68. Cf. Ozaki Masaharu, 'The History of the Evolution of Taoist Scriptures' (*Acta Asiatica*, 1995, 68), p. 48.

among the first group of people to react to and make use of the Buddhist precept. There is no evidence that suggests that there was a rule of non-killing in early Daoism, not even in its earliest existing document contained in the *Taiping jing* (太平經 ‘scripture of great peace’) which according a brilliant Chinese scholar itself had incorporated elements of Buddhist culture.⁶⁹ The many occurrences of such a rule against killing in Daoist disciplinary texts doubtlessly resulted from borrowing concepts found in Buddhism, as a genre, and were actual imitations of Buddhist precept texts.⁷⁰ Nor did the practice later claimed to be Daoist tradition⁷¹ seem to have prohibited animal sacrifice, for in 166, Emperor Huan of the Latter Han (漢桓帝 r.147-168) held an animal sacrifice to Huang Lao (黃老 ‘Yellow Emperor and Laozi’) in order to seek an auspicious outcome.⁷² This may explain why the *Taiping jing* only prohibits its converts from making sacrifices to gods and divinities of non-Daoist traditions, known as *yaodao* (妖道, ‘religion or cult of demons’).⁷³ The same is said in the *Laozi xiang-er zhu* (老子想爾注 ‘Xiang-er’s commentary to the *Laozi*’),

⁶⁹ This text seems to have several different strata of which the dates have been the subject of much scholarly discussion. For the latest discussion, see Barbara Hendrischke ‘Early Daoist Movements’, in Livia Kohn ed., *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), pp. 143-45. For Buddhist influence on this text see Tang Yongtong, *Hanwei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi* (漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 Shanghai shudian, 1991), pp. 59-64.

⁷⁰ For instance, see *Taishang jingjie* (太上經戒, comp ca.500) DZ. 562/2a; *Wushang miyao* (無上秘要 comp. during 560-578) DZ. 773/44/3a, 44/11a; 46/5a, 46/7a, 46/8a-b. For studies on the influence of Buddhist Vinaya on Daoism, see Yang Liansheng, ‘Laojun yinsong jiejing jiaoshi’ (ZYLYYJ 28:1, 1956), pp. 17-54; Jan Yün-hua, ‘Cultural Borrowing and Religious Identity: A Case Study of the Taoist Religious Codes’ (*Hanxue yanjiu*), 4:1, 1986, pp. 284-5; Livia Kohn, ‘The Five precepts of the Venerable Lord’ (*Momumenta Serica*), 42, 1994, p. 172; Benjamin Penny, ‘Buddhism and Daoism in the 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao’ (TR 6:2, 1996), pp. 1-16; Barbara Hendrischke and Benjamin Penny, ‘The 180 Precepts Spoken By Lord Lao: A Translation and Textual Study’ (TR 6:2, 1996), pp. 17-29.

⁷¹ On the establishment of Daoism as a religion, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp and Peter Nickerson, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 1-185; Terry Kleeman, *Great Perfection: Religion and Ethnicity in a Chinese Millennial Kingdom* (Honolulu: Univeristy of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 61-66; Barbara Hendrichke, ‘Early Daoist Movements’ pp. 134-164.

⁷² *Dongguan hanji jiaozhu* (Wu Shuping ed., Henan: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987) 3: 126.

⁷³ TPJHJ 8-12: 52.

another 2nd century Daoist text.⁷⁴ Ge Hong's (葛洪 283-343) *Baopu zi* (抱朴子 'master who embraces simplicity'), which with some reservations generally disapproves of animal sacrifice and condemns blood sacrifice of *yaodao* in particular, stands as an early Daoist example of castigating popular cults.⁷⁵ However, this very text, offering the most important part of Daoist practice —the nurturing technique taken from earlier traditions—, also recommends that practitioners eat particular animals or particular parts of some types of animals as they are considered to have certain important tonic value for nurturing the body.

The fact that later institutional Daoism as a whole opposes blood sacrifice seems to have been due to two factors: internal opposition to popular cults and even more likely, the influence of Buddhism. Since the latter part of the Western Jin (西晉 256-316), Buddhism was perceived by Daoists as an increasingly challenging opponent of their own religious practices. Thus, their awareness of the need to systematize their own religious beliefs and practices brought about mass scriptures, rituals, beliefs, conduct code and practices through imitating the Buddhist system. With this process, the Daoists assumed a typically Buddhist negative attitude towards blood sacrifice and then gradually let it sink into their scriptures which were composed in the late fourth and fifth centuries. Among the many texts that appeared during this period of time, the *Santian neijie jing* (三天内解經 'scripture of the inner explanations of the three Heavens', mid-5th cent.), the *Laojun bai bashi jie* (老君說百八十戒 'hundred and eighty precepts spoken by the Lord Lao', ca. 350 [?]), the *Lu xiansheng daomen ku lue* (陸先生道門科略, 5th cent.),⁷⁶ the *Zhengyi*

⁷⁴ Jao Tsong-yi, *Laozi xiang-er zhu jiaozheng* (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), pp. 31, 69. The date for the composition of this text has been assigned to the second half of the fifth century. See Mugitani Kunio, 'Rōshi sōji chū ni tsuite' (*Tōhō gakuho*, 1985, 57), pp. 75-107; Kobayashi, 'The Establishment of the Taoist Religion (Tao-chiao) and Its Structure', p. 24.

⁷⁵ *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985) 4: 77, 85, 19: 172-77. As one of the most important early Daoist master of the Eastern Jin, Ge played an extremely important role in the formation of one of the Daoist tradition. For his contribution to Daoism see, Liu Yujing, 'Dongjin Nanchao jiangdong shizu yu daojiao zhi guanxi: yi Ge Hong, Lu Xiuqing yu Tao Hongjing wei zhongxin' 东晋南朝江东士族与道教之关系——以葛洪陆修静与陶弘景为中心, National Cheng Kung University MA thesis, 2003.

⁷⁶ For the opposition to popular cults in these three texts, see Chi-Tim Lai, 'The Opposition of Celestial-Master Taoism to Popular Cults during the Six Dynasties' *Asia Major*, 1998, 11, part II, pp. 1-20.

fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing (正一法文天師教戒科經 ‘text of the correct-one law: scripture of the precepts instructed by celestial masters’, latter part of 5th cent), and the *Taishang dongyuan shenzhou jing* (太上洞淵神咒經 ‘scripture of highest divine incarnation from the cave-abyss’),⁷⁷ are typical in the sense that they limit the condemnation only to blood sacrifices made to demonic divinities, allowing ancestral sacrifice five times a year and sacrifices to the gods of the soil and hearth twice a year.⁷⁸ Another two Daoist texts, which exist only as quoted fragments seem to also convey the principles of kindness and the prohibition of killing animals (see Daoshuang’s essay below).

In reality, however, all these literary instructions do not mean that practising Daoists actually avoided consuming animals, nor does it mean that they stopped performing blood sacrifice to their own gods. Rather, on certain occasions Daoist masters did recommend animal sacrifice. For instance, in the celebrated sixth century Daoist master Tao Hongjing’s (陶弘景 456-536) *Zhengao* (真誥, ‘instruction of the true ones’), we are told that some laymen had sacrificed a white dog and prayed to the earth god. They did so under the instruction of a Daoist master named Xu Mi (許密), a person who might have belonged to the Xu clan. This particular clan had a history of following Shangqing (上清 ‘supreme purity’) Daoism.⁷⁹

That there existed in Daoism a blood or cult of animal sacrifice said to be Daoist can be seen in a section of a Buddhist polemic treatise, the ‘*Xi Taishan wen*’ (檄太山文, ‘Condemnation of Mount Tai’) written by Zhu

⁷⁷ DZ. 29/4:1a. The latter ten fascicles of the twenty-fascicled version collected in the present Daoist canon are said to have been compiled no earlier than the Tang dynasty, while the first ten fascicles were produced by the latter part of the fifth century. See Zuo Jingquan, ‘*Dongyuan shenzhou jing* yuanliu shikao: jianlun tangdai zhengzhi yu daojiao zhi guanxi’ (*Wenshi* 文史 23, 1984), pp. 284; Ozaki Masaharu, ‘The History of the Evolution of Taoist Scriptures’, p. 49.

⁷⁸ *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe*, DZ 761: 1a-b, 8a-b. For an English translation of this text, see Peter Nickerson’s ‘Abridged Codes of Master Lu for the Daoist Community’ in Donald S. Lopez Jr. ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 347-359.

⁷⁹ *Zhengao* (真誥), (DZ. 637-40) 15: 4b-6a, 11b. For an outline of the Xu family believing in Daoism, see Kobayashi Masayoshi, ‘The Establishment of the Taoist Religion’, p. 27, n.19.

Daoshuang (竺道爽 fl.ca. late 4th and early 5th cent.).⁸⁰ This piece of writing could be the earliest open criticism of Chinese Buddhism on animal sacrifice. Therefore, it deserves a few words. The objective of Daoshuang's essay is to rebuke the spirit that takes Mount Tai as its shelter and shrine and thereby enjoys blood offerings. Speaking in the first person, Daoshuang seems to address the spirit directly. First, he clarifies that Taishan is a natural feature of the Chinese landscape. Then he cites the Daoist belief that their high-ranking deities such as *dongwanggong* (東王公 'king father of the east') and *xiwangmu* (西王母 'queen mother of the west') all float in the air, happily flying about in the universe, and do not settle in the human world.⁸¹ He goes on to say that whatever settles on the Taishan and claims to be a god receiving blood sacrifices is not a real god. To prove this, he quotes from a text entitled *Lingzheng ji* (零征記 'records of evidence for spiritual efficacy') saying:

If a god is not genuine, he interferes with a myriad of things: on the basis of opportunity and pleading the echo, he spreads [something] to delude the opinion of the public, creates weird things, [makes people] lose their simplicity, and stirs up anxiety in people's mind. [Thus people] exhaust their fortunes and kill to extremes: ending the lives of beings, meaninglessly destroying adult [animals], and chopping up their bones and flesh (i.e. young animals).⁸²

⁸⁰ HMJ, T52, pp. 91b-92b. This text was ascribed to Sengyou by the editor of the *Gumyōshū kenkyū* (弘明集研究, Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 1973-75), p. 748. It is unlikely to be the case because Sengyou edited the HMJ and did not claim it to be his work. Seen against the fact that Chinese *monastics* have been following Dao-an's invention of assuming the character shi (釋) as their religious surname in the latter part of the fifth century, at the latest, Daoshuang may have been a monk before the new invention was made or widely used in the Buddhist community because his last name was still 'Zhu', from which it could be deduced that his teacher might be either from India or a disciple of an Indian master. Yet in any case, he himself could not have been an Indian, otherwise he would be one of the rare few foreign masters in the recorded Chinese Buddhist history whose Chinese was so good as to enable him to not only compose a polemic work, but also display a skilful maturity in the art of literary parallelism. Thus, it is believed that he may have been living before or during Dao-an's time, the fourth century.

⁸¹ T. 52, p. 91b-c.

⁸² T. 52, p. 91c. The quoted text is not found in the Daoist canon, and seems to have been an early Daoist text that has escaped the attention of scholars. The same is the *Huang Luozi jing* (黃羅子經), HMJ, T. 52, p. 91c.

若神不正者，則干於萬物，因時託響，傳惑俗聽，成沃散朴，激動人心。傾財極殺，斷截眾命，枉害中年，俎其骨肉。

And then he quotes from the *Zhenzhong jie* (枕中誡, ‘instruction inside the pillow’) saying:

Do not inflict suffering on the wriggling that contains breath and on all kinds of insects. Do not eat bird eggs [because] there are divinities inside. [Beings] receive their lives from “the Heavenly Source”, their forms from “the Earthly Hall”. [We humans] were originally endowed by “Two Polarities” [i.e. heaven and earth]. How can [one] harm [other] living beings?⁸³

故枕中誡曰：‘含氣蠢蠕，百蟲勿嬰，無食鳥卵，中有神靈；天元受命，地庭有形，祖稟二儀，焉可害生’？

At this point Daoshuang reveals the true target of his criticism: he is attacking the continued Daoist practice of animal sacrifice:

All this is contrary to common truth and violates the Daoist own scriptures. The masses of people possess benevolence; they do not kill in accordance with [the principle of] Heaven, let alone harm pigs and goats by drinking their blood.

⁸³ T. 52, p. 91c. Two other texts with similar titles as this one are the *Zhenzhong shu* (枕中書) attributed to Ge Hong and the *Zhenzhong ji* (枕中記) of Shen Jiji’s (沈既濟 fl. ca.780). Daoshuang could never have read the latter, as it was written in the Tang dynasty. But could the book he quoted from be Ge Hong’s *Zhenzhong shu*? The question is hard to answer, for the title of the quoted work is *Zhenzhong jie* which is not the exact title of Ge Hong’s work, unless we take that Ge Hong’s work was known by both *Zhenzhong shu* and *Zhenzhong jie*, or that by (枕中誡曰 Daoshuang meant ‘the *Zhenzhong* warns that...’. However, the sentence quoted by him cannot be found in the present version of the *Zhenzhong shu*. Daoshuang’s 枕中 may have meant to be an abbreviated title of Liu An’s (劉安, d. 122 BCE) work, the *Zhenzhong hongbao mishu* (枕中鴻寶秘書), see HS 36: 1928. This, however, cannot be certain. So is the time of Daoshuang. Daoshuang also cited from the *Xuanzhong ji* of which the author is also a mystery though some has attributed it to the commentator Guo Pu (郭璞 276-322). See Robert F. Campamy, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 93, fn. 230. Judging by its content, which has a similar nature as those of the *Shanhai jing* (山海經) and the *Bowu zhi*, this attribution may be right. For the dating of the present version *Zhenzhong shu*, see Yu Jiaxi, *Siku tiyao bianzheng* (4 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol.3, 19: 1222.

此皆逆理, 違道本經。群民含慈, 順天不殺, 況害豬羊, 而飲其血!

Then he goes on to say that unlike the fake gods who react according to how people treat them—giving blessings to those who please them and punishment to those who treat them poorly, the real divinities of the five great mountains are the essence of the seasons, which are not affected by the way people treat them. Thus, he starts to enumerate the faults of the fake gods and criticises their demonic behaviour. Here, he also cites from another seemingly Daoist text entitled *Xuanzhong ji* (玄中記, ‘records about the Inside of the Dark’), which maintains that whoever claims to be so-and-so deity is actually a demon transformed by some animal.⁸⁴ In conclusion, he writes that he will summon several kinds of Buddhist deities to make the Taishan god give up its false appearance and return to the cemetery where he eats only fruit and drinks only stream water.⁸⁵

At first glance, Daoshuang’s text appears to be an attack on the demon that claims to be the god of the Taishan and even suggests that he accept the Daoist *Dongyue jun* (東岳君, the Lord of the Eastern High Mountain), but it actually implies that the large-scale annual animal sacrifices held by the government are not acceptable. He quotes this more than twice from Daoist scriptures. Only at the end of his arguments does he resort to Buddhism. This highly suggests that his criticism may also aim at certain animal sacrifices sanctioned by Daoism.⁸⁶

Back to the Buddhist community, further encouragement for the observation of basic Buddhist precepts came from the fashion of emperors, members of royal families and high-ranking officials being ordained as Bodhisattvas during the fifth century.⁸⁷ And as one could imagine that a

⁸⁴ T. 52, pp. 91c-92a. A similar idea of animal transformation can be also found in the *Baopu zi*, in which the author, Ge Hong, interweaves it with the traditional theory of time system. See *Baopu zi neipian jishi*, 17: 304.

⁸⁵ T. 52, p. 92b.

⁸⁶ Some time after the fourth century, the general practice of Daoism also showed rejection to blood sacrifice and occasionally to the state sacrifice and ancestral sacrifice. See Rolf A. Stein, ‘Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries’ (in Holmes Welch & Anna Seidel ed., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 55; Chi-tim Lai, ‘The Opposition of Celestial-Master Taoism to Popular Cults during the Six Dynasties’.

⁸⁷ A survey of Bodhisattva Vinaya texts has been made. See Ōno Hōdō, *Daijō kaikyō no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Sankibo busshorin showa, 1963.

rule of not-to-kill animals is easily found in any version of the Bodhisattva precepts in use during the period. The *Chu sanzang jiji* refers to a few documents which seem to have been records of Bodhisattva ordinations held in the palace.⁸⁸

With such influential promulgations, the impact of the Buddhist rule of non-killing on the general public would bound to be visible. For instance, in his response to He Chengtian's (何承天 370-447) article, the Buddhist Yan Yanzhi (顏延之 384-456) insists animal sacrifices be banned.⁸⁹ In addition, it is said that because he took pity on living beings, Emperor Xianwen (獻文帝 r. 466-472) of the Northern Wei in the last year of his rule ordered his officials to stop building big monasteries to save the lives of tiny creatures, and banned commoners from keeping big birds, like eagles, as pets.⁹⁰ Another individual named Lu Du (盧杜 d.ca. 493) seems to have had a special understanding of the non-killing rule. It is said that Lu was defeated in battle and fled but was stopped by the river Huai (淮水). He then vowed that if he came out of the danger alive, he would stop killing.⁹¹ Finally there is case from the fifth century. In his will, a gentleman by the name of Lei Shao (雷紹 fl. 534) tells his son, 'in the funeral rites of my hometown [people] must kill dogs and horses. [This] does not benefit the dead, and you should stop doing it (吾本鄉葬法, 必殺犬馬。于亡者無益, 汝宜斷之)'.⁹² It is not easy to say that this case is an illustration of the influence of Buddhist anti-blood sacrifice teachings since his will does not reveal any Buddhist connections. Yet, as being shown above, both Confucian tradition and Daoism originally were not against animal sacrifice, we may as well believe this could only be resulted from a Buddhist influence.

Similarly, the evident influence of non-killing is also reflected in short-story collections compiled in the fifth and sixth centuries. Many stories were created to propagate the idea of non-killing, and most, if not all, were accompanied by descriptions of frightening cosmic [karmic] consequences of killing. One story from the fifth century *Youming lu* (幽冥錄, 'records of the nether world') shows that even ordinary lay adherents of Daoism

⁸⁸ T. 55, pp. 92c, 93a.

⁸⁹ HMJ, T. 52, pp. 25c07.

⁹⁰ WS 114: 3039.

⁹¹ NQS 54: 935-6.

⁹² BS: 49: 1807. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer the *Numen* for this reference. Cf. QSGSDQHLCW, vol. 4, p. 3784.

were conscious of the Buddhist objection to killing and animal sacrifices.⁹³ Such awareness was largely due to the penetration of Buddhism into society through different means of promotion and, as will be shown, to government prohibitions against killing and blood sacrifice which began its issuance towards the end of the fifth century.

3.2. Government's Bans on Blood Sacrifices

Despite some royal family members, higher officials, and many literati were converted to Buddhism, especially in the Eastern Jin, Buddhist principle of non-killing and its criticism of animal sacrifices does not seem to have made any influence on the governmental decision regarding animal sacrifice until much later. Three emperors of the Qi dynasty (479-502) issued edicts aimed at banning hunting. Prince Xiao Ziliang (蕭子良 460-494), the second son of Emperor Wu of the Qi dynasty (i.e. Xiao Daocheng 蕭道成 427-482), twice admonished his father over bird hunts. In his second written admonition, instead of using the Confucian concept of *ren* (仁 'humanity') and the Menciusian idea of benevolence, he found it convenient to use Buddhist teaching and argued that since Bodhisattvas did not kill, they lived a long life. He himself tried his best to follow their example day and night because he expected meritorious consequences for doing so.⁹⁴ It is impossible to know if the emperor changed his habits because of Xiao Ziliang's admonishments, but what is evident is that his successor Xiao Ze (蕭蹟 452-493), who judging by his engagement in several Buddhist events seems to have been very keen on Buddhism, issued three edicts banning killing on the six Buddhist fast days and hunting in certain locales.⁹⁵ It is very unfortunate that we are left with nothing but the titles of those edicts which are luckily preserved in the *Chu sanzang jiji*.⁹⁶ Still, Xiao Ze's will, which contains a noteworthy imperial

⁹³ YML p. 170; FYZL, T. 53, p. 756a-b. For Buddhist influence in this work, see Wu Hongsheng, 'hanyi fojing dui *Youming lu Xuanyan ji de yingxiang*', MA thesis, Xinan University, 2008.

⁹⁴ NQS 40: 699.

⁹⁵ Bans on killing fish on three seasonal full-moon days and on killing animals on religious fast days can be traced back to Aśoka's (fl. 268-239 BCE) edicts. See his Pillar Edict V, in Radhagovinda Basak ed., *Aśokan Inscriptions* (Calcutta: Progressive Publisher, 1959), p. 103.

⁹⁶ T. 55, p. 93a. The four records are the *Qi Gao Wu erdi chi liuzairi duansha ji* (齊高武二皇帝敕六齋斷殺記), the *Qi Wu huangdi chiduan zhongshan xuanwuhu yulie ji* (齊武皇帝敕斷鍾山玄武湖漁獵記), the *Qi Wu huangdi chiba shezhi*

edict, is preserved in the *Nanqi shu* (南齊書 ‘book of the southern Qi dynasty’). In it, he instructs his subjects to ‘Be careful to make no animal sacrifices. Instead, only provide pancakes, tea, dry cooked rice, wine and dry meat. That is all. All the rich and poor under the sky should follow this rule. Before the gods of earth, mountains, and shrines, vegetarian food should be placed on the first and the fifteenth days of the month.’ (慎勿以牲為祭，唯設餅、茶飲、乾飯、酒脯而已。天下貴賤，咸同此制。未山陵前，朔望設菜食).⁹⁷ The instructions in his will stand unprecedented in the Chinese ritual tradition.

The imperial edict seems to have been influential since in the *Liangshu* (梁書 ‘book of the Liang dynasty’) we find an official by the name of Gu Xianzhi (顧憲之 436-509) who specifically advised his children that offerings made to any shrine other than the ancestral temple must not include animal meat.⁹⁸ The reason why he specifically instructed his children to follow the traditional code (i.e. offering animal’s blood and flesh) when sacrificing at the ancestor shrine is unknown, but the persistent practice of this tradition met even stronger objections in some years after the Qi was replaced by the Liang dynasty, to which the following paragraphs now turn.

The impact of Buddhist non-killing during the Liang dynasty became evident when Emperor Wu (梁武帝 i.e. 蕭衍, 464-549), about whom there is much more to say below, issued an edict declaring that all criminals condemned to death be exempted by selling their labour. We are told by the *Liangshu* that he made his decision because he believed that killing ‘was against the meaning of compassion as written in the Buddhist texts and also harms the beings-loving virtue of other teachings’.⁹⁹

With the progress of his study of Buddhism, the emperor became more and more involved in Buddhist activities, and the enforcement of the non-killing rule was not his initial act. In regards to his prohibition of the killing of animals, the decision might not have been made on his own. Some time before 518, the well-respected and celebrated *vinaya* master

duanmai niaoque ji (齊武皇帝敕罷射雉斷賣鳥雀記), and the *Qi Wen huangdi Wenxuan wang fenhui guwang ji* (齊文皇帝文宣王焚毀罽網記). The third record can be confirmed by the *Nanqi shu* (49: 848).

⁹⁷ NQS 3: 61-62.

⁹⁸ LS 52: 760.

⁹⁹ LS 3: 89.

Sengyou and a layman named Bo Chaodu (柏超度) presented the emperor a memorial, which is recorded as *Qing jin Danyang Langya erjun soubu qi* (請禁丹陽瑯琊二郡蒐捕啟 ‘memorial requesting a ban on hunting and fishing in the two prefectures of Danyang and Langya’). Their suggestions met with disapproval from an official by the name of Xie Jiqing (謝几卿 fl. 6th cent.) who presented a dissenting memorial entitled *Danyang Langya jun duan soubu yi* (丹陽琅琊郡斷蒐捕議 ‘comments on the ban on hunting and fishing in the prefectures of Danyang and Langya’).¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, Xie Jiqing’s response was not recorded. So, it is impossible to know how the discussion went, or whether the matter was resolved.

The lack of literary sources will not affect our discussion of Emperor Wu’s bans on animal sacrifices since there are other written records which can provide sufficient information. His first ban was the prohibition of animal sacrifice at the ancestor shrine.¹⁰¹ Sources provide conflicting dates for the ban. According to the *Guang hongming ji* (廣弘明集, ‘supplementary collection of [materials] indicating the spreading of the teaching’), it was issued in the twelfth year of his rule (i.e. 513), while two other official histories suggest it was the year 517.¹⁰² Following the majority rule, the latter suggestion may be more acceptable. Strong evidence shows that the ban was the suggestion of Sima Jun (司馬筠 5th-6th cent.) and other court officials.¹⁰³ The Buddhist influence on Sima’s suggestion was conspicuous, because he borrowed from Buddhism to prove his point that animals should not be killed. The emperor, however, did not act rashly, though he was already an extremely pious Buddhist by that time. Instead, he passed the matter onto the imperial secretary (*shangshu* 尚書) Zhu Yi (朱異 483-549) for a proper discussion. Zhu Yi did not seem to have argued much against the Sima’s suggestion, except to say that vegetarian food could be used for ancestor sacrifice. He added that the great sacrifices of ox and goat to the Bright Hall (*mingtang* 明堂) should be exceptions to this and continue to follow the ancient rule.¹⁰⁴ Although we do not have a complete record of their discussions, in the end, the emperor:

¹⁰⁰ QSGSDQHLCW, vol.4, p. 3208a.

¹⁰¹ Andreas Ernst Janousch, ‘The Reform of Imperial Ritual During the Reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (502-549)’ (PhD.dissertation, Cambridge University, 1998), p. 116.

¹⁰² NS 5: 196; LS 2: 57.

¹⁰³ SSH 7: 129.

¹⁰⁴ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 293c. Zhu Yi’s suggestion is in *Ji mingtang yi* (QSGSDQHLCW, vol. 4), p. 3320b.

ordered that royal doctors must not use living creatures for medicine. When brocade officials were put in charge of weaving, cloths must not use any images of immortals, beasts and birds [in designing its patterns], because it would be in opposition to the principles of benevolence and kind-heartedness to treat [them] disrespectfully when cutting through the cloth. As a result of this, he prayed to Heaven and at the ancestor shrine he hoped that the teaching of forbidding killing would benefit all beings with a conscience. The animal victims used in sacrifices to Heaven and its ancestors should all be replaced with wheat products. Sacrifices made to mountains and rivers should be abolished. After that time, because ancestor sacrifices avoided the use of animal victims, there was no more blood food. Even when high-ranking officials objected to it, and government officials and commoners clamoured in disagreement, the emperor did not change his mind. In the tenth month of the winter when ancestor sacrifice was performed, vegetables and fruits first started being used.¹⁰⁵

敕太醫不得以生類為藥，公家織官紋錦，並斷仙人鳥獸之形，以為褰衣裁剪有乖仁恕。於是，禱告天地宗廟：以去殺之理，欲被之含識，郊廟牲牷，皆代以麵，其山川諸祀則否。時以宗廟去牲，則不復為血食，雖公卿異議，朝野喧囂，竟不從。冬十月，宗廟荐羞，始用蔬果。

Not long after this official ban, another new prohibition aimed at banning the slaughter of animals in state sacrifices was issued. It had been observed that the emperor's ban on using animals in state sacrifices was the indirect result of Shen Yue's (沈約 441-513) pleading, which we shall discuss below as it mainly concerns vegetarianism.¹⁰⁶ Other sources, however, show that it was the result of the efforts of the official Zhou Xingsi (周興嗣 d.521) and others. Yet, it seems unwise to deny the influence that Shen's essays had on the emperor. Zhou presented a memorial entitled *Yingqi buyong sheng yi* (迎氣不用牲議, 'suggestion that sacrifices made to the seasonal lords should not use animals'.¹⁰⁷ Although there is no evidence showing that the emperor immediately implemented this suggestion, Zhou's effort was followed by the appeals of Liu Xie (劉勰 fl.495-517) and others,¹⁰⁸ which are likely to have contributed to the issue of the imperial ban on animal sacrifice to the Bright Hall where major state sacrifices took place.

¹⁰⁵ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 293c; LS 2: 57; NS 6: 196.

¹⁰⁶ Richard B. Mather, 'The Bonze's Begging Bowl: Eating Practices in Buddhist Monasteries of Medieval India and China' (JAOS 101: 4, 1981), p. 422.

¹⁰⁷ QSGSDQHLCW vol. 4, p. 3293.

¹⁰⁸ LS 50: 710. Also see WS 99: 2187.

We also have a piece of information on this kind of activity in the North during the period in question: Emperor Wenxuan (文宣, i.e. Gao Yang 高洋 r. 550-559) of the Northern Qi in his late life is said to have issued edicts to ban the killing of animals.¹⁰⁹ Another historical source shows that another emperor had deliberately let his officials take charge of the state sacrifices, because he believed in Buddhism.¹¹⁰ Even more significantly, from a fragmental epigraphically inscription saved from on a stele erected in 552, we know that even in the Northern Qi the Buddhist idea of non-killing had already been well known in society. This inscription records a local Buddhist social organisation appealing for an end of killing animals at the two traditionally important sacrificial rituals, i.e. in the second month and the eighth month of the year. Apart from the fact that the text of the inscription uses Buddhist concepts and phrases, it also provides the reason for which those listed members appealed for non-killing was that they all had realized what Buddhism advocated—life is suffering. This no doubt shows the Buddhist influence or the influence of the imperial prohibition on animal sacrifice from the South.¹¹¹ In addition, examples of promoting Buddhist non-killing teaching through local societies during this period can also be found in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, one monk even take a every extreme step to promote it.¹¹²

Thus, by about 520 the two most important state sacrifices had been reformed. Undoubtedly, Buddhism was the driving force behind these reformations. This seems natural in view of the fact that both Sima Jun and Zhou Xingsi, both of whom played important roles in effecting the reform, had been senior court officials during the Qi dynasty before gaining prominence during the Liang.¹¹³ According to the history, almost all the emperors of the Qi dynasty were followers of Buddhism. It therefore can be deduced that the ritual changes of the Liang dynasty may have resulted in part from the influence Buddhism had over the previous dynasty.

The Liang dynasty's policy for sacrificial rituals, like its reign, ended when it was replaced by the Chen (陳 557-589) dynasty. The emperors of

¹⁰⁹ XGSZ, T.50, p. 554b.

¹¹⁰ WS 78: 1737.

¹¹¹ Hao Chunwen (郝春文), 'Cong chongtu dao jianrong: zhonggu shiqi chuantong sheyi yu fojiao de guanxi' (從衝突到兼容——中古時期傳統社邑與佛教的關係, 《普門學報》第 24 期, 2004), pp. 1-41.

¹¹² For instance, see XGSZ, T. 50, pp. 701b, 682a.

¹¹³ Sima Jun's memorial can also be seen in his biography of the LS 48: 674-76.

the Chen invalidated Emperor Wu's bans on animal sacrifice and revived the earlier practice of using a yellow bull as a sacrificial animal in the *jiao* ritual.¹¹⁴ Still, Yan Zhitui (顏之推 531-590), an official whose career ranged through four dynasties and who lived both in the South and North, may be the only known post-Liang individual impacted by the Buddhist non-killing principle. In his *Yanshi jiaxun* (顏氏家訓 'family instructions of the Yan clan') left for his children, he instructs them not to offer a blood sacrifice to him at his grave, because he believed that killing incurred sin.¹¹⁵

The rulers of the Sui dynasty were devotees of Buddhism. Though no edicts permanently prohibiting animal sacrifice were made in that dynasty, there is evidence that some of its policies bear the influence of the teaching of non-killing. This evidence is from two edicts preserved in the Buddhist canon, both of which were issued by Emperor Wen (隋文帝, i.e. 楊堅, r. 581-604) and aimed to ban the killing of animals on two different occasions, Buddhist fast days and his own birthday. The emperor's first edict was issued in the third year of the Kaihuang (開皇) period (i.e. 583CE), and reads:

Loving living beings and hating killing [them] are the foundation of a king's rule. [Because of] the appearance of the Buddha's Way, good deeds have something to be based on. [Anything] that bears *qi* or contains a soul takes life as the most important thing, [therefore] I should persuade [all the people] under the sky to have the same mind in rescuing and protecting [them]. In the places where the central and prefectural governments have established Buddhist temples [people] practise the Way every year from the eighth to the fifteenth day of the first, the fifth, and the ninth month. On these days when the Way is practised, people [around these places] far and near alike must not kill any beings of the sentient sort.¹¹⁶

好生惡殺，王政之本。佛道垂教，善業可憑。稟氣含靈，唯命為重，宜勸勵天下，同心救護。其京城及諸州官立寺之所，每年正月、五月、九月，恆起八日至十五日，當寺行道。其行道之日，遠近民庶，凡是有生之類，悉不得殺。

As has been seen before, an imperial ban on killing on the six days of Buddhist fasting every month had already been made in the Qi dynasty,

¹¹⁴ *Suishu* 7: 126.

¹¹⁵ *YSJXJ* 7: 356.

¹¹⁶ *LDSBJ*, T. 49, p. 108a.

and the days mentioned in Emperor Wen's edict agree with those found in Xi Chao's *Fengfa yao*.¹¹⁷

The second edict is more of a personal interest and was issued in the third year of the Renshou (仁壽) period (i.e. 603CE). In it, the emperor applied the principle of non-killing to the observation of traditional filial piety.

Sorrowful for (my) parents, it was wearisome enough for them to bear me. Their kindness, [which I have been] longing to repay, is as vast as the boundless sky.¹¹⁸ But, [my] sincere respect cannot reach [them] just as the tree blown by the wind cannot stop [by itself].¹¹⁹ The frost and the dew have fallen, [I] deeply miss them, though in vain.¹²⁰ The thirteenth day of the sixth month is my birthday. I shall ask [people] throughout the country for [the sakes of] Emperor Wuyuan and Queen Yuanming to stop slaughtering.¹²¹

哀哀父母，生我劬勞，欲報之德，昊天罔極。但風樹不靜，嚴敬莫追。霜露既降，感思空切！六月十三日是朕生日，宜令海內為武元皇帝、元明皇后斷屠。

¹¹⁷ ZJ, T. 1, p. 912a; T. 52, p. 86b. It is believed that these days were taken from the FWJ (T. 24, p. 1007b), in which it is a minor rule for a Bodhisattva that no breach of *zhai* and violation of Vinaya rules should occur on those specific days. See Lin Boqian, 'Beichuan fojiao yu Zhongguo sushi wenhua' (*Dongwu zhongwen xuebao* 5, 1998), p. 102. This is certainly not right because the *Fengfa yao* predates the FWJ. Further details on *zhai* practice and the date of the FWJ will be given below.

¹¹⁸ These two phrases were copied from the *xiaoya* section of the *Shijing*, which provides the earliest idea of repayment to one's parents. See SJJZ (*xiaoya-liao'e*) 307.

¹¹⁹ This was rephrased from a very popular saying which expresses the remorse of failure in performing filial piety. The original saying is, 'the tree wants to be still, but the wind does not stop [blowing]; the offspring want to provide, but parents have already passed away' (樹欲靜，而風不止；子欲養，而親不在). See *Hanshi waizhuan jishi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), p. 309.

¹²⁰ 霜露既降 was quoted from a passage in the *Liji*: 'The frost and dew fall. The *junzi* by treading on them will certainly have the feeling of sadness, which is not because of coldness (霜露既降，君子履之，必有悽慘之心，非寒之謂也)', which also means that the offspring profoundly miss their departed parents, LJJJ(jiyi) 46:1207-8

¹²¹ SSH 2: 49. Part of this edict exists in a concise version in the LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 107b-c.

The emperor's policy seems to have had no precedence in China, but a similar policy was perhaps already in use in India during the Buddha's lifetime. A story in the Vinaya texts tells of a sick monk who wanted to eat meat and a pious devotee who promised to bring him some the next day. However, on that very next day, it turned out that there was no meat in the market, because killing had been banned by King Prasenajit (波斯匿, the Buddha's contemporary) on that particular day.¹²² In another version of that same story included in a different text, the reason that killing had been banned on that day was that the queen had given birth to a new baby son.¹²³

4. Conclusion

Despite the fact that animal sacrifices in ancient China were state affairs, the Buddhist principle of non-killing did manage to make an impact on the practice. This impact came through with the spread of Buddhism in society. First, it was the Buddhists who launched attacks on animal sacrificial activities involved in popular cults which existed in some religious practices affiliated to Daoism. When Daoism started to consciously plagiarise Buddhist texts, campaign against blood sacrifice also came into the agenda of Daoist propaganda. However, animal sacrifices made to Heaven and its ancestors were still supported by the Confucian tradition, which happened to be the government's administrative ideology. When some emperors of the Southern and Northern dynasties became devout Buddhists, they issued edicts banning all animal sacrifice. Although the emperors of the Sui dynasty were Buddhists, they only prohibited killing animals in certain circumstances, showing that the legacy of the bans was subject to the changes of rulers and dynasties.

¹²² WFL, T. 22, p. 148b; XYJ, T. 4, p. 375a-c.

¹²³ *Genben shuo yiqie you bu pinaiye yaoshi* (根本說一切有部毘奈耶藥事 trsl. by Shi Yijing 釋義淨 635-713), T. 24, p. 3c, 4b. Different versions of the story can be found in other Vinaya texts: SSL, T. 23, p. 185c; SFL, T. 22, p. 868c; MHSI, T. 22, p. 486b.

CHAPTER TWO

CHINESE BUDDHIST VEGETARIANISM

If banning animal sacrifice is a direct way to stop killing animals, avoiding the consumption of animal parts is a daily straightforward contribution to the good of non-killing. Though, in China, edicts of prohibition on animal sacrifice did not typically continue to work after the demise of the dynasty in which they were issued. Buddhist vegetarianism survived the changes of dynasties and became one of the characteristics that distinguished Chinese Buddhism from the two other living traditions of Southern and Tibetan Buddhism. That is to say, vegetarianism, as a monastic precept, was developed only in China, and from there, it was also transmitted to other countries influenced by Chinese culture, such as Korea and Japan. Today, to the majority of the Chinese public, observing vegetarianism has become one of the three criteria by which a monk or nun can be judged as authentic.¹

The reason for which Chinese Buddhism alone has vegetarianism as a religious practice and a monastic precept is two-fold. As a cultural and social phenomenon, the development of monastic vegetarian practice in China owed much to the long-existing vegetarian practices of the Chinese elite associated with the traditional fast.² As a monastic rule, it was instituted under the political interference of a Buddhist emperor and as a result of the popularisation of the *Fanwang jing* (梵網經 ‘sūtra of Brahmā’s net’). The remaining sections of this chapter are intended to demonstrate the importance of these factors. Before we show how Buddhist vegetarian practice developed in China, however, a closer look at the vegetarianism depicted by Chinese translations of Indic Buddhist texts seems necessary.

¹ The other two criteria are celibacy and the monk robe.

² Some Chinese cultural phenomena related to Buddhist vegetarianism have been observed. See Lin Boqian ‘Beichuan fojiao yu Zhongguo sushi wenhua’, pp. 93-138.

1. Indian Buddhist Views on Meat Eating According to Chinese Sources

In the relatively early Buddhist sources (such as the Pāli texts of the Buddha's discourses, and some of their equivalents found in the Chinese translations of the Āgamas 阿含) there is no evidence that the Buddha was actually a vegetarian.³ Besides that, no example of the Buddha forbidding his disciples from eating meat was found, apart from proscribing that raw meat and some types of animal flesh not be eaten due to safety or/and health concerns.⁴ Conversely, in the Theravāda tradition there is a whole sūtra that justifies meat eating by arguing that defilements and demerits do not come from eating meat but from immoral acts of three kinds—the mind, the mouth, and the body.⁵ What is more, in a few Chinese translations the Buddha is found to have even made negative remarks about the austere Jain practice of abstaining from eating meat.⁶ In an Abhidharma text the Buddha is even quoted to have expressed that eating

³ The ambiguity of a word in a passage of one Theravada scripture describing the last meal of the Buddha has led some scholars to suggest that the Buddha may have died of eating pork. This suggestion seems erroneous because 1) that that particular word can be understood as mushroom, which was what the translators of the related Chinese scriptures did, 2) and that it is more reasonable to think that some sort of wild mushrooms can be life-threateningly dangerous than to believe that pork kills people. Several studies on this issue have been carried out. For the latest, see Mettanando Bikkhu & Oskar von Hinüber, 'The Cause of the Buddha's Death' (*Journal of Pali Text Society*, 2000), pp. 105-118. For a concise description of 'meat eating in early and Theravada Buddhism', see Peter Harvey's *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 159-163.

⁴ He told his disciples not to eat human and dragon meat. For the sake of the monks' own safety, he also advised they should avoid eating the meat of the following animals: horse, elephant, dog, eagle or vulture, wild hog, monkey, and lion (MHSL, T. 22, p. 487a). The list is different in other texts, e.g. T. 22, pp. 148c-149a. And since a sick monk in ignorance ate human flesh prepared by a devotee out of respect, prohibitions against the eating of human flesh were laid down. The devotee offered the monk her own flesh as a medical ingredient without the monk's knowledge, WFL, T. 22, p. 148b; XYJ, T. 4, p. 375a-c.

⁵ *Āmaganda-sūta* in *Sutta-nipata*, pp. 42-45. Cf. E. Washburn Hopkins, 'The Buddhistic Rule Against Eating Meat', p. 461-62.

⁶ *Chang ahan jing* (長阿含經), T. 1, pp. 47c, 66c; ZAHJ, T. 1, pp. 592b, 712b; *Nigoutuo fanzhi jing* (尼拘陀梵志經), T. 1, p. 223b. Early evidence shows that even the founder of the Jain religion, Mahāvira, consumed meat occasionally. See Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (London and New York: Routledge, second edition, 2002), p. 177.

meat is among the practices which are not conducive to attaining enlightenment.⁷ Even the strictest monk Mahākāśyapa, who was often made an interlocutor with the Buddha in later scriptures requesting that monastics be prohibited from eating meat, is also said to have consumed meat himself on occasions.⁸ However, it would be untrue to say that meat eating was never an issue during the Buddha's lifetime; Devadatta (Tipo Daduo 提婆達多, also appeared as Tiao Da (調達) and Dipo Dadou (地婆達兜) in later translations), the Buddha's rebellious disciple and rival, once asked the Buddha to ban monastics from eating meat, but the latter left the choice of dieting on vegetarian food to his disciples.⁹ In all the existing Vinaya texts belonging to different Buddhist schools, Devadatta's suggestion is unanimously regarded as an evil idea intended to split up the Saṃgha.¹⁰

It was only under criticism (or possibly pressure) from other religious practitioners and at the suggestion of the Buddhist laity that the Buddha laid down restrictions regarding the eating of meat. Regulations starting from the rule that only 'meat that is clean in three respects' (三淨肉) can be eaten,¹¹ and going on to the prohibition against begging deliberately for meat or fish (unless the meat or fat is used as medicine) were all formulated under the urging of the laity or in response to accusations from non-Buddhists.¹² The main charge against eating meat seems to have come

⁷ *A pi damo ji yimen zu lun* (阿毘達磨集異門足論), T. 26, no. 1536, p.406a.

⁸ *Zengyi ahan jing*, T. 2, p. 647b.

⁹ WFL, T. 22, p. 164a; SSL, T. 23, p. 265a; SFL, T. 22, p. 594b; CYJ, T. 4, p. 696b.

¹⁰ For instance, see WFL, T. 22, p. 164a; *Genben shuo yiqieyou bu pinaiye posengshi* (根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事) T. 24, p. 149b; *Genben shapoduo bu lu she* (根本薩婆多部律攝), T. 24, p. 546c.

¹¹ The meat that is lawful to eat is the meat which he knows, hears or infers has not been killed specially for him. Any meat that falls into these three possibilities is not supposed to be eaten. See XYJ, T. 4, p. 375c; *Chanmi yaofa jing* (禪祕要法經), T. 15, p. 249c; WFL, T. 22, p. 149c; MHSL, T. 22, p. 487a; SSL, T. 23, pp. 264c-79b.

¹² E.g. MHSL, T. 22, p. 361c; WFL, T. 22, p. 55b, 147b; SSL, T. 23, p. 97a. For a brief examination on the three-fold rule of eating meat, see Chandra Shekhar Prasad, 'Meat-Eating and the Rule of—Tikoṭiparisuddha', in A. K. Narain ed., *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Memorial Volume in Honour of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1979), pp. 289-95. The Buddha's positions on the meat eating matter and on the precept of three-fold rule (i.e. meat clean in three respects) have been defended, if not justified. See V. A. Gunasekara,

from Jainism. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, a group of Jains wrongly accuses General Siha of having slain a great beast specifically for the Buddha, and further claims that the Buddha intended to eat the meat while knowing that the deed had been done on his account.¹³ This incident is also recorded in the Theravada's Vinaya text.¹⁴ At least the Jains did not accuse the Buddha of actually eating the meat but instead claimed that the Buddha had planned on eating the so-called intended meat.

According to Chinese translation, Brahmins, whose practice of animal sacrifice was the target of the Buddha's frequent and severe attacks, also attacked the Buddha for not banning meat consumption.¹⁵ In the *Foshuo weicengyou yinyuan jing* (佛說未曾有因緣經, 'sūtra spoken by the Buddha on unprecedented events' trsl. by Shi Tanjing [釋曇景 fl. 385]), a Brahmin defines the Brahmanic lifestyle as one in which believers abstain from alcohol, meat and the five pungent vegetables such as onion and garlic. In another passage of the same text, a Brahman layman recounts that his father followed the teachings of heretics and abstained from alcohol, meat and the five pungent vegetables. In a third passage the Buddha calls the behaviour of some Brahman laypersons dishonest because they broke their teachers' prohibitions by secretly eating meat and drinking alcohol. The same text later indicates that the public respected the world-renouncers who were vegetarians more than those who were not.¹⁶ Interestingly enough, in response to this public preference, some hypocritical Buddhist monks, in order to gain more offerings and greater respect from a particularly rich lay follower, made people say things like the monks enjoyed solitude, strictly observed the precepts, and most of all, abstained from eating meat and drinking alcohol. As a result, these monks

'Buddhism and Vegetarianism: The Rationale for the Buddha's Views on the Consumption of Meat', at <http://www.saigon.com/~anson/ebud/ebdha069.htm>, visited on 2nd March 2004.

¹³ *Anguttara Nikāya* IV, Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1896, pp. 185-189.

¹⁴ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, p. 159.

¹⁵ *Faju piyu jing*, T. 4, pp. 581c-2a; *Fo suoxing zan*, T. 4, p. 22a; *Foshuo chu kong zhai huan jing*, T. 17, p. 552a; JLYX quotes from the DZDL, T. 53, pp. 10c-11a; *Youposai jiejing*, T. 24, p. 1059c; ZAHJ, T. 2, pp. 22c, 24b-25c.

¹⁶ This general Indian attitude has been well put by Richard Gombrich, 'Respect for freedom from material wants is a universal Indian value... The more a monk demonstrates his indifference to worldly comforts, the more he impresses the laity and comes to be regarded as worthy of their material support'. *Theravāda Buddhism*, p. 95.

were showered with money and delicacies.¹⁷ These passages show that vegetarian practice existed outside of Buddhism before it was taken up by Buddhists and that the public tended to prefer religious professionals to live a life as simple as possible, and in this particular case, to be vegetarians.

Considering the fact that loving-kindness, compassion and rebirth make up the central doctrines of Buddhism, its traditional practice of eating meat presents two problems. First of all, it seems hypocritical to tell people not to take a life and to avoid the occupations that involve killing but not prohibit eating meat which necessitates killing animals. Secondly, it is contradictory to allow eating meat while preaching the belief that man could be reborn as an animal. In other words, eating animal flesh may result in one's eating the flesh of one's relatives, a sort of remote cannibalism.¹⁸ If the Buddha neglected these two problems because the fact that the monastic daily life consisted of begging and was not able to allow the monks to choose what they ate, then the later compilers of Buddhist scriptures were certainly well aware of them. Thus, all the later texts that advocate vegetarianism were developed in one way or another to address these issues.

The traditional view maintains that the *Da banniepan jing* is the source of the prohibition against eating meat for Buddhists.¹⁹ Modern scholars

¹⁷ T. 17, pp. 581c, 587b, 587c, 583b.

¹⁸ For instance, the *Foshuo mayi jing* (T. 17, pp. 533c-4a) has this advice: 'Contemplate the fact that you from your many past lives have also been other things, such as a ' wife and son, slave, servant, and domestic animal, like an ox, horse or something else which was hard-working, heavy carrying and also slaughtered, cut apart, minced and roasted. Now, as a human, [you] take others to be [your] wife, slave, servant, and also have domestic animals like ox, horse and other animals which you have slaughtered, cut apart, minced, roasted, poked, and chopped at will' (意汝從無數世以來，亦為人作妻子奴婢，亦作畜生牛馬蟲，勤苦重負債，亦為人所屠剝膾炙。今為人，復取人作妻子奴婢，亦取畜生牛馬蟲，屠剝膾炙刺斫自在)。An identical passage can be seen in the *Faguan jing* (法觀經, T. 15, p. 241c). For a similar idea, see *Foyi jing*, T. 17, p. 737c; LDJJ, T. 3, p. 37c; etc.

¹⁹ T. 55, p. 91c. The knowledgeable monk Shi Daoshi (釋道世 d. 683) in two of his works discusses the tradition of not eating meat by quoting from several translations. However, like the modern scholars who have briefly discussed the tradition, he too overlooked the early translations that contain information on the teaching of not eating meat. See his FYZL T. 53, pp. 974a-76b, and *Zhujing yaoji* (

have generally held that the roots of Buddhist vegetarianism can be found in the diffusion of the *tathāgatagarbha* (如來藏, ‘matrix of the thus-come ones’) theory rather than in the precept against taking a life.²⁰ Both opinions are in need of reconsideration. Although it has been suggested that the *Da banniepan jing* was formed in about the third century,²¹ the first *nirvāṇa-sūtra* that contains the notion of *tathāgatagarbha* and vegetarianism was the *Foshuo da bannihuan jing* (佛說大般泥洹經 ‘sūtra spoken by the Buddha at his great demise’) brought to China by Faxian (法顯 ca.337- 442) and translated by Buddhabadhra and Baoyun [寶雲] in the 14th year [418] of the *yixi* 義熙 period of the Eastern Jin dynasty.²² However, evidence shows that at least two centuries before the making of this translation or in some cases even before the formulation of the Tathāgata stemma, there had already been some Buddhist translations in China encouraging vegetarianism on the grounds of either the non-killing rule or the doctrine of rebirth. The first translation indicating that there were Buddhists who did not eat meat is one of the earliest translations made into Chinese by the first foreign Buddhist translator, An Shigao, roughly in the second part of the 2nd century AD. We are informed of this in the last paragraph of the text which includes the Buddha’s words explaining why arahats and silent Buddhas do not eat meat.²³ If this piece of information seems a bit ambiguous, then the *Daoxing banruo jing* (道行般若經, ‘wisdom sūtra of the Way and Its Path’, trns. by Zhi Chen), conveys the message abundantly clear. It states that when a Bodhisattva’s faith is so firm that nothing can change his aspirations, he should not participate in the seven kinds of activities, which include associating with other religious people in making sacrifices, drinking alcohol, eating meat

諸經要集) T. 54, pp. 159b-161c. Cf. Zhenjing Shi, ‘The Formation and Transformation of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra in Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Daoism’ (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2003), p. 4.

²⁰ D. Seyfort Ruegg, *Le Traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston Rin Chen grub*, Paris, 1973, pp. 15-17, fn. 5. He also has a short English paper on this subject: ‘Ahimsā and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism’, in Udaya Mawarachchi ed., *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (London and Bedford: The Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd, 1980), pp. 234-241, esp. 237.

²¹ Mather, ‘The Bonze’s Begging Bowl’, p. 421.

²² CSZJJ, T. 50, p. 60b.

²³ ‘佛言：阿羅漢不食肉者，計畜生從頭至足，各自有字無有肉名。辟支佛計本精所作不淨故不食肉’. *Foshuo chuchu jing* (佛說處處經), T.17, p. 528b. This translation looks like a collection of disconnected notes on some doctrinal points of the Buddha with a certain Mahāyāna feature.

and practising breathing exercises.²⁴ Stronger proscription against eating meat comes from the *Banzhou sanmei jing* (般舟三昧經 ‘sūtra on the concentration of close encounter’), which explicitly advises its practitioners not to eat living creatures (*zhongsheng* 眾生 lit. ‘all living creatures’).²⁵ Again, a passage in the *Chengju guangming jing* also advocates abstention from killing animals for their meat. In one paragraph the text says that after a certain discourse from the Buddha, some gentlemen in the audience became mentally firm in five things (無轉心, i.e. the state of *avaivartika*, ‘no backsliding’) one of which was to never kill animals for the pleasure of the taste [of their meat], i.e. not to eat meat.²⁶ Given the fact that one of the obvious goals of this text is to advocate non-violence and the preservation of animals, it seems possible that its prohibition against eating meat was inspired by non-violence and not by the belief that an animal is one of the six forms in the cycle of rebirth. In other words, as far as Chinese sources are concerned, the doctrine of loving-kindness and the rule of non-killing were the earliest basis for the development of vegetarianism in the Buddhist tradition.

This 2nd century pro-vegetarian idea from Buddhism may have been the basis of the exaggeration in the alleged Later Han text *Mouzi lihuo lun* (牟子理惑論, ‘Mouzi’s treatise of clarifying doubts’) which stated that abstention from drinking alcohol and eating meat were one of Buddhism’s principal disciplinary rules.²⁷

Different from the above Han translations is the third century translation, the *Foyi jing* (佛醫經, ‘sūtra’ of Buddhist therapy’, translated in co-operation by Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎 and Zhiyue 支越 [i.e. 支謙] in about 225), which shows that the reason for abstaining from eating meat has to do with the teaching of rebirth.²⁸ In this text, the Buddha introduces four types of reflection meant to be employed upon by his monastic followers

²⁴ T. 8, p. 455c. The breathing exercises seem to have been Chinese native practices because they are found in a branch of Daoist tradition in the Western Han, see MHB vol. 4, pp. 43-45, 83-86.

²⁵ T. 13, p. 898c.

²⁶ T. 15, p. 455c.

²⁷ HMJ, T. 52, p. 6a. For a study of this texts in English, see John P. Keenan, *How Master Mou Removes Our Doubts: A Reader-Response Study and Translation of the Mou-tzu Li-huo lun*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994.

²⁸ T. 17, p. 737c. The vegetarian diet is said to have been also emphasized by Pythagoras along with his belief in rebirth, Obeyesekere, *Imagining Karma*, p. 204.

while eating. The first reflection is to think that the food that is being eaten is the flesh of one's past life blood relatives. Although here the text does not clearly say what the monks ate, considering that in the Buddhist rebirth doctrine only sentient beings participated in the rebirth cycle, it is probable that he is indeed referring to eating meat. This is supported by another passage which reads, 'for people, eating meat is like eating one's own children. Animals were once our parents, brothers, wives and children (人食肉，譬如食其子，諸畜生皆為我作父母、兄弟、妻子).²⁹ After this, the text encourages people to stop eating meat by stressing that "people who are able to refrain from eating meat will have the blessings of not being startled and terrified" (人能不食肉者，得不驚怖福).³⁰ This suggests that a belief in the doctrine of cause and effect is indeed the rationale for not eating meat.

An even more explicit prohibition against eating meat is found in a Western Jin translation, the *Faju piyu jing*. In this text, a story tells that the Buddha once went to a village on a mountain where the villagers lived off of hunting. The Buddha preached to the housewives, and when they tried to offer him a meal, he refused the offer by saying that in the teachings of all Buddhas, eating meat was not allowed.³¹ Judging from the principal message and context of the discourse, the Buddha's remark was based on the teaching of loving-kindness.

Several translations made during the Eastern Jin dynasty advocate vegetarianism both directly and indirectly. A text called *Qing guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni zhujing* (請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼咒經 'esoteric formula sūtra of inviting the bodhisattva who looks out for the world to vanquish poison and dangers', trsl. by an Indian lay Buddhist named Zhu Nanti [竺難提]), states that to practise the Dhāraṇī (陀羅尼, 'esoteric formula') one needs to perform a fast which includes abstaining from eating meat.³² A similar requirement in performing a Tantra ritual can also be found in other texts rendered during the same dynasty.³³ In

²⁹ T. 17, p. 737c.

³⁰ T. 17, p. 738a.

³¹ T. 4, p. 581b.

³² T. 20, p. 35c.

³³ *Foshuo guanding jing*, T. 21, pp. 497b, 501b, 528c; *Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* (七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經), T. 21, pp. 537a, 540a-b, 543a, 552a. This notion is backed up by another text translated slightly later. See *Xiangye jing* (象腋經 trsl. by Dharmamitra), T. 17, p. 787.

another text belonging to the Nirvāṇa text group, a vegetarian diet appears to be one of the practices observed by believers who have taken the ‘three refuges’,³⁴ which indicates an increase in the importance of vegetarianism for Buddhists. Still later, Kumārajīva translated the *Milei chengfo jing* (彌勒成佛經, ‘sūtra of Maitreya’s archiving Buddhahood’ also appears as 彌勒大成佛經), which from its alternative title suggested by the Buddha in the text seems to promulgate not eating meat for the reason of loving-kindness.³⁵ Another text translated in almost the same period as the previous one also requires the practitioner to abstain from drinking alcohol and from eating meat.³⁶

Translations made over the next few dynasties continued to provide even stronger prohibitions against eating meat. By the end of the Eastern Jin the first *tathāgatagarbha* text, the aforementioned *Da bannihuan jing*, was translated. In this text, vegetarianism, for the first time became a topic for the Buddha’s discourse. It contained most of the justifications for vegetarianism which appeared earlier, and especially put forward the idea that every sentient being had a Buddha-nature (佛性 the potential capability to become a Buddha). To eat the flesh of a sentient being was to destroy that Buddha-nature. Following this translation, a considerable number of texts with similar emphases on and complex arguments for vegetarianism appeared one after another, including the most extended version of the *Da banniepan jing*.³⁷ Of all these translations, two salient

³⁴ *Bannihuan jing* (般泥洹經, a work of an early unknown translator), T. 1, p. 184a.

³⁵ T. 14, pp. 429c, 434b. Its translator is unknown. It is by nature a conversion of a Jātaka (‘birth story’) about the Buddha who happened to be a rabbit king and offered his body to an ascetic by jumping into a fire. In this sūtra, the Jātaka uses the altruistic action of the Bodhisattva rabbit to show the self-sacrificial spirit of the Bodhisattva teaching. Its alternative name somewhat implies that it may be a different translation of the *Yiqie zhi Guangming xianren cixin yinyuan bushirou jing* (一切智光明仙人慈心因緣不食肉經, T. 3, No.183) in which the self-sacrificial action is used to change the meat-eating habit of the ascetic. These two texts, apart from the partial resemblance of their titles and the similar theme, are also the same in referring to the Bodhisattva Maitreya and his future world.

³⁶ See *Da fengdeng daji jing*, (大方等大集經, trsl.by Dharmakṣema) T. 13, p. 1a. This idea continues to occur in Tantra texts translated in later dynasties.

³⁷ *Foshuo da bannihuan jing*, T. 12, pp. 868c-9b (for a survey of Chinese translations of *Da banniepan jing*, see Wang Bangwei, ‘Lüelun dacheng *Da banniepan jing* de chuanyi’, *Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 7, 1993, pp. 103-27); *Xianyu jing* particularly prohibits the eating of the meat that is clean in three respects (T. 4,

features can be summarised: 1) like early translations, they are all Mahāyāna texts, and most of them are associated with the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha*, although few explicitly suggest that there is a logical relationship between vegetarianism and the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha*; 2) the appeal for vegetarianism is stronger than in previous translations as they include more reasons to support vegetarianism. Most *tathāgatagarbha* sūtras in one way or another deny the fact that eating meat is never prohibited in the earlier scriptures, which of course also include the denial of the legitimacy of eating ‘the meat that is clean in three respects’.³⁸ To better present arguments and justifications of these translations for vegetarianism we introduce one important scripture, the *Lengqie Abaduoluo baojing* (楞伽阿跋多羅寶經 ‘*Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*’, trsl. by Guṇavarman d. 431), a text that appears to be the most comprehensive sūtra supporting vegetarianism but surprisingly without employing the notion of the Buddha-nature.³⁹

p.375c); the *Da fangdeng wuxiang jing* (大方等無想經, trsl. by Dharmakṣema also self-named as *Dayun jing* 大雲經 and *da baniepan jing* 大般涅槃經), T. 12, pp. 1096c, 1099a; *Yangjuemoluo jing* (央掘魔羅經 trsl.by Guṇavarman, T. 2, pp. 521a, 537a, 540c, etc.; *Foshuo dabaniepan jing* (trsl.by Dharmakṣema in 421), T. 12, p. 626a-c; *Lengqie Abaduoluo baojing* (楞伽阿跋多羅寶經 T. 16, pp. 513c-514b. There are two other translations of this text, both of them provide reasons for observing the vegetarian diet: the *Ru lengqie jing* 入楞伽經, T. 16, pp. 561a-564c, and the *Dacheng ru lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽經, T. 16, pp. 624c-622c). The reasons given in the latter two are more elaborate than in the former. *Baiyu jing* (百喻經, trsl. by 求那毘地 d. 502), T. 4, p. 554c; *Bianyi zhangzhe zi jing* (辯意長者子經 trsl. by Fachang 法場 fl. ca. 510), T. 14, p. 837c. The prohibition based on the concept of rebirth appears in two dubious texts made in the fifth century: the *Da fangguang huayan shi-e pin jing* (大方廣華嚴十惡品經 T85, p. 1360b) and the FWJ (T. 24, p. 1006b). Finally, three translations made in the Liang dynasty prohibit meat eating for the reasons of loving-kindness and compassion: the *Wenshushili wen jing* (文殊師利問經 trsl. by Saṃghapala 僧伽婆羅 460-524, T. 14, pp. 492c-93a), the *Foshuo baoyu jing* (佛說寶雨經, trsl. by Saṃghapala, T. 16, p. 318a) and the *Dacheng baoyun jing* (大乘寶雲經, trsl. by Saṃghapala, T. 16, p. 241a).

³⁸ The stark denial is found in a Chinese work attributed to the Vinaya master Shi Daoxuan. In it, the master was told by guardian deities that only evil monks would SLANDER the Buddha by saying that the Vinaya did not prohibit monks from eating meat. Quoted in the FYZL, T. 53, p. 981a.

³⁹ For a suggestion about the date of the text, see Chikashi Kuroda, ‘A Note on the Lankavatara Sutra’ (*Tenri Journal of Religion* 1, 1955), pp. 91-93.

The sūtra has a whole chapter on the reason of why eating meat is not acceptable and allowed, and this chapter seems to have been extracted and circulated independently at least up to the beginning of the sixth century.⁴⁰ According to this chapter, the reasons why a Buddhist should not eat meat are as follows:

- 1) From the beginning of the cycle of rebirth, sentient beings have been related to each other.
- 2) Butchers sell all kinds of meat together.
- 3) Meat is produced in an unclean and smelly environment.
- 4) Some beings are frightened of the smell generated from eating meat. Others, such as dogs, hate it.
- 5) Eating meat prevents the practitioner from developing loving-kindness.
- 6) Meat is consumed by the vulgar and the idiot. Those who eat it get a bad name.
- 7) Eating meat prevents esoteric formulas and techniques from taking effect.
- 8) Those who kill beings are affected by the scene of killing and thus have the mind to kill.
- 9) Those who eat meat are abandoned by deities.
- 10) Eating meat makes one have bad breath.
- 11) Eating meat creates bad dreams or nightmares.
- 12) The smell of meat can be sensed by tigers and wolves when in the forest (thus it invites dangers).
- 13) Eating meat disorders the good habit of dieting.
- 14) Eating meat makes the practitioner not want to renounce the world.
- 15) The Buddha never allows his disciples to eat meat. He even often says that one should reflect that having a meal is to eat the flesh of one's own child, or to take medicine.
- 16) As in one story, eating meat could lead to the eating of human flesh, which consequently leads to disasters.⁴¹
- 17) Strictly speaking, there is no meat that is clean in three respects, because buying meat and catching and butchering animals are all linked by money and the desire for the taste.
- 18) Compassion should come first. Thus, one should always see all beings as one's own only child.

⁴⁰ T. 16, pp. 513c-514b; CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 30a

⁴¹ This point may refer to the story of King Puming in the LDJJ, T. 3, pp. 22b-24a.

So far, two points should be clear. One, all the above anti-meat-eating translations belong to the Mahāyāna tradition, which means among Indian Buddhists only Mahāyānists were promoting pure vegetarianism. Two, the scriptures advising against eating meat were translated before the texts containing the *tathāgatagarbha* notion were available in Chinese, which means that Buddhist vegetarianism did not start in association with the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha*. In addition to this, the phenomenon that the Buddhist vegetarian practice in China occurred earlier than the translation of the first *Niepan jing* that contains the *tathāgatagarbha* notion also adds weight to the suggestion that Chinese Buddhist vegetarian practice did not result from the translation of the *Niepan jing* but from some other traditions and translations, translations which are discussed above. This looks even more likely when we start to ask the question of how the practice of vegetarianism was observed in India.

To our surprise, non-canonical sources show that there seems to have been no vegetarian practice existing in the Indian Buddhist order in general. When Faxian at the beginning of the 5th century was in an Indian region regarded by the Buddhist tradition as the most privileged place to learn and practise Buddhism, the so-called ‘central kingdom’ (Madhyadeśa 中國), he recorded what he saw. His records report: the teaching of non-killing was wonderfully observed; most of the people did not kill living beings; Animals were slaughtered and butchered by hunters and outcasts; Monks and nuns were well-respected and lacked no supplies. But he made no mention of vegetarian practices in the Buddhist community.⁴² Yet, somehow this piece of information was mistranslated by Legge and accordingly misled Peter Harvey in saying that “by the early fifth century, in the Buddhist heart-lands of Northeast India, nearly all classes but the lowest came to be vegetarian”.⁴³ It is also worth noting that in his travel records Faxian, considering he is from a Mahāyāna tradition, did not want to miss a single chance to mention any Mahāyāna practices along the way on his journey, but in no place did he come across a Buddhist community which observed vegetarianism. In fact, we are told by Kumārajīva’s biography that a couple of decades earlier before Faxian went to India, Kumārajīva was everyday provided with a whole roasted goose as a token of high respect for his great achievement in mastering the

⁴² *Faxian zhuan* (法顯傳), T. 51, p. 859b.

⁴³ Peter Harvey, *Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 164.

Dharma by the king of a Karshimiran country.⁴⁴ His biography also says that not far from Kumārajīva's hometown, then belonging to central Asia, was the place where he was converted to and studied a Mahāyāna tradition. What makes us wonder is that why there was no Buddhist observing a vegetarian diet in a region where Mahāyāna was practised.

The only Buddhist kingdom said to have practised vegetarianism before the 7th century was called Wuchang (烏場國, Oḍra or Uḍradeśa, a small country in the far north of ancient India). This record was made by a sixth century Chinese traveler named Song Yun (宋雲 fl. 518-520) and Huisheng (惠生) who were sent by the court of the Northern Wei in 518 to the 'Western Regions' (mainly Central Asia) to search for Buddhist scriptures. They said that the king of the country was dieting on vegetarian food and worshipping the Buddha day and night.⁴⁵ When referring to the country called Zhujubo (Čugupan, today's Qargaliq /Yecheng in Xinjiang), their observation implied that some people in the country also avoided eating meat.⁴⁶ Still, neither Faxian nor Xuanzang (玄奘 602-664) mentioned vegetarianism when they recorded their observations of the first country in more detail. The second country does not seem to be mentioned either.⁴⁷ This may very well suggest that the vegetarian practice in this kingdom came from somewhere other than India. It has been suggested that in the empire of Da Yuezhi (大月支 'Indo-Scythian'), which controlled parts of central Asia and northern India from the 1st BCE to 3rd CE and which the Chinese envoy Zhang Qian (張騫, d. 114BCE) visited,⁴⁸ Buddhists were vegetarians.⁴⁹ Whether this view is acceptable and whether vegetarian practice in Wuchang came from Da Yuezhi or not is still subject to further inquiry. One anecdote is noteworthy, however, and that is that during the persecution of Buddhism in the Northern Wei in 446, some Chinese monks fled to central Asia.⁵⁰ As the discussion in section 3.3 will show, long before that year vegetarian monks had already existed in China. Again, near the middle of the eighth century in a territory under

⁴⁴ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 100b.

⁴⁵ *Huisheng shi xiyu ji* (惠生使西域記), T. 51, p. 867a; *Luoyang qielan ji* (洛陽伽藍記), T. 51, p. 1020a.

⁴⁶ *Luoyang qielan ji*, T. 51, p. 1091a.

⁴⁷ *Faxian zhuan*, T. 858a; *Datang xiyu ji* (大唐西域記), T. 51, pp. 870a-84b.

⁴⁸ SJ 123: 3158.

⁴⁹ Gu Zhengmei, 'Zhongguo de diyige fojiao huangdi: Han Huandi', in *Fojiao yu Zhongguo wenhua guoji xueshu huiyi lunwen xiaji* (Taiwan, 1995), pp. 791-810.

⁵⁰ For instance, see GSZ, T. 50, p. 392c.

Chinese control, not far from Kumārajīva's homeland, Kucha, the only vegetarians were a small number of Chinese Mahāyānists.⁵¹ There were perhaps in India some Mahāyānists co-existing with other Buddhists and creating the texts advocating vegetarianism. These people, particularly the ones in the "central kingdom", became vegetarian in the seventh century as observed by Xuanzang.⁵² However, could this observation be a reflection of what was practised in China at that time?⁵³ In the medieval times, the standard Jain view towards the Buddhists was that the latter were habitual meat-eaters, unless this reference was meant not to include Mahāyāna monks.⁵⁴ In any case, this was certainly not the case with Chinese Buddhists since by the late seventh century vegetarianism had been made a daily rule for the Chinese monastics, nation-wide.

As far as the Buddhist scriptures are concerned, the doctrine of vegetarianism is found in Mahāyāna Buddhism, a term normally denoting later Buddhist traditions of India, China, Chinese-Buddhism-influenced countries and Tibet. Among these traditions, when it came to practice, only Chinese Buddhism developed a permanent vegetarian lifestyle for monastics. For the cause of this unique phenomenon of Chinese Buddhism, four factors have been suggested by scholars.⁵⁵ First, some traditional practices such as *pigu shiqi* (卻穀食氣, 'avoiding eat grains and ingesting air') associated with *fangshi* (方士 'master of techniques') and *daoshi* (道士 'man of the Way') were popular in the Han times and contributed to the formation of the Chinese Buddhist vegetarian practice. The problem with this view is that the practice of *pigu shiqi* does not necessarily require the practitioner to stop eating meat and drinking alcohol,⁵⁶ and that the purpose of the practice is not only just to stop eating meat, but to stop consuming solid foods altogether. The Celestial Masters who were Daoists developed different forms of sacrificial banquets called

⁵¹ Wang wu Tianzhu guo zhuan (往五天竺國傳), T. 51, p. 979b.

⁵² XGSZ, T. 50, p. 449c.

⁵³ Timothy H. Barratt, 'Stūpa, Sūtra and Sarīra in China c. 656-706 C.E.', *Buddhist Studies Review*, 2001, No. 1, pp. 1-64.

⁵⁴ See Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, p. 241.

⁵⁵ Gijun Suwa, *Chūgoku Chūko Bukkyōshi Kenkyū* (Daitō Shuppansha, 1989), pp. 39-91.

⁵⁶ *Mouzi lihuo lun*, T. 52, p. 6a. This is a set of nurturing practices mentioned in the *Zhuangzi* and *Chuci*. They were popular by the end of Qin and later incorporated in some forged Buddhist scriptures. See, Xiao Dengfu, 'Dunhuang xiejuan suojian shou dao jiao pigu shiqi sixiang yingxiang de fojing' (*Zongjiaoxue yanjiu*, 2, 2002), pp. 1-13.

chu (廚 ‘kitchen’). Though none of them specifically prohibited using meat, some of them prescribed animal organs as an ingredient.⁵⁷

Second, the Confucian idea of *ren* agrees with the non-killing doctrine of Buddhism and therefore helped with the development of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism. This point is of course a confused belief. We know that Confucius was so kind that ‘he used a fishing line but not a net, and used a stringed arrow but never aimed at roosting birds’.⁵⁸ However, he never prohibited the killing of animals, nor was he against eating meat. Still, he did believe that ancient Chinese sages loved beings to live and hated them to die (好生惡殺).⁵⁹ In fact, as Blakeley suggests, what Confucius wants to imply in his *Lunyu* (論語 analects), the most important Confucian classic, was that ‘nature is sustained by using some parts for the good of others which is for the good of nature as a whole’.⁶⁰ The overwhelmingly clear statements from this text showing that the prime emphasis of Confucian tradition is on benevolence (*ren*), or still better humaneness, are more likely to explain its central idea, *xiao* (孝 ‘filial piety’), or at the most to stress affection towards people.⁶¹ In short, as the author of the *Nanqi shu* says, Confucian *ren* is just a ritual and that only Buddhist *ren* is real compassion.⁶² His point can be attested by a passage from the *Lunyu*. Once, Zigong suggested that the goat used in ancestor sacrifice on the first day of every month should be spared. To this suggestion, Confucius replied, ‘You care about the goat. I care about the ritual’.⁶³ Mencius in a way advanced Confucius’ *ren*. He believed that no man was devoid of a heart-mind that was sensitive to the sufferings of

⁵⁷ Christine Mollier, ‘Les cuisines de Laozi et du Buddha’ (*Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie*, 1999-2000), 11, pp.45-90.

⁵⁸ LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) *shu-er* 8: 148; *Hanfeizi jishi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 12: 692, cf. Sterckx, ADEC, p. 145.

⁵⁹ XZJJ (ZZJC, vol. 2) *aigong* 20: 356. As noted before, this exact phrase was striking enough to be used by Xiang Kai in describing the spirit of Buddhism. See HHS 30B: 1075, 1082, 88: 2921; *Houhan ji jiaozhu*, 10: 276.

⁶⁰ Blakeley Donald N. ‘Listening to the Animals: the Confucian View of Animal Welfare’ (*Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30:2, 2003), p. 144.

⁶¹ For special discussions on Confucian *ren*, see Luo Xinhui, ‘Guodian Chujian yu rujia de renyi zhibian’ (*Qilu xuekan* 5, 1999), pp. 27-31; Liu Feng, ‘Cong Guodian Chujian kan Xianqin rujia de “neiren waiyi” shuo’ (*Hunan daxue xuebao* 2, 2001), pp. 36-40; Liu Zemin, ‘Kongzi yixiao shiren xi’ (*Zhongnan gongye daxue xuebao* 3, 2001), pp. 270-73.

⁶² NQS 54: 946-47.

⁶³ LYZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) *bayou* 4: 59.

others. A feeling of commiseration was the principle—germ sprout—of benevolence. He also said that ‘the attitude of a *junzi* (君子 ‘gentleman’, or ‘exemplary person’) towards animals should be: ‘once having seen them alive, he cannot bear to see them die, and once having heard their cries he cannot bear to eat their flesh. That is why the *junzi* stays out of the kitchen’.⁶⁴ Yet, he never says gentlemen should not eat meat. Rather, he just hints that gentlemen should leave the slaughtering to others. In fact, in two other passages he is found to have said that by keeping up with the proper season, there would be plenty of fish and meat to eat. Plus, it was necessary for the elderly people to eat meat.⁶⁵ Again in the same passage he advises a feudal state ruler that if he could rule his state so well as to make certain that every seventy-year old commoner have meat to eat every day, it would be no problem for him to become the king of the whole country.⁶⁶ Thus, like the Confucian *ren*, the Mencian doctrine of *ren* does not extend kindness to animals as well as to humans. The only Chinese idea that is truly comparable in a general sense with the Buddhist loving-kindness is the teaching of *ci* (慈, ‘compassionate’) found in two passages of the *Daode jing* (道德經 ‘scripture of the Way and virtue’), of which two earlier versions have been discovered in a tomb and dated to the third century BCE.⁶⁷ Yet, this teaching does not specifically spell out how people should treat animals, since the text was written in a terse style conveying abstract theories on rulership and life.⁶⁸

Third, the Buddhist idea of *baoying* (報應 ‘retribution and response’) was also another contributing factor in the development of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism. This is rather suggestive because 1) the connection between eating meat and *baoying* cannot be found in the

⁶⁴ MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) weizheng 1: 32, 47-50; XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) wangzhi 9: 105. The translation is Blakeley’s, ‘Listening to the Animals’, p. 145. According to the *Liji*, the definition of *junzi* is that those who ‘have encyclopedic knowledge but are modest, most sincere, and diligent in doing good deeds’ (博聞強識而讓, 敦善行而不怠), LJJJ (quliA) 3: 71.

⁶⁵ MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) lianghuiwangA 1: 57, 13: 537. The idea that people after seventieth could not feel full without meat continued to the Han dynasty (HS 24A: 1120).

⁶⁶ MZZY (ZZJC vol.1) lianghuiwangA 1: 57.

⁶⁷ Guo Yi, ‘Cong Guodian Chujian Laozi kan Laozi qiren qishu’ (*Zhexue yanjiu*, 7, 1998), pp. 47-55. A. C. Graham suggests that the first appearance of the text was about 250 BCE. See his *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), p. 216.

⁶⁸ LZJS 8: 271, 273.

translations made before the seventh century, 2) as will be shown, the concept of *baoying* existed in pre-Buddhist China. Besides, it was the Chinese who propagated Buddhist vegetarianism who linked *baoying* with the eating of meat.

Fourth, the traditional Confucian mourning ritual might be another influential factor. This would have been true only if we believed that this ritual had something to do with Emperor Wu's imperial campaign of making vegetarianism a monastic rule. Besides, there is a problem with the link between this ritual and the Buddhist vegetarian practice. For although, as we will show, the vegetarian diet was compulsory during the mourning ritual, there is no direct connection between this ritual and Buddhist practices, let alone with early Chinese Buddhist vegetarians.

Nevertheless, this last point does rightly suggest that native vegetarian practices predate the arrival of Buddhism in China. The following section is to show how the vegetarian diet was practised by the Chinese people before the arrival of Buddhism. Thereby, a link connecting the Chinese vegetarian practice and Buddhism will surface.

2. The Vegetarian Tradition in Early China

A vegetarian diet in ancient China was an important part of the ritual for people of high class who were normally legitimate meat eaters in their society. Before explaining this practice, we should explore briefly the privilege of eating meat in the early Chinese culture.

2.1. Eating Meat in Early China

The consumption of animals in the life of the early Chinese varies. From the sacrifices of the government and popular religious activities to traditional medicines, and from the daily meals of the elite to beauty treatments, animals were always the victims.⁶⁹ We have seen how

⁶⁹ For evidence on the consumption of animals in medical practices of the Han dynasty, see *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu 4*, Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu ed., Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985; Donald J. Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: the Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1998; Wei Qipeng and Hu Xianghua, *Mawangdui Hanmu yishu jiaoshi* (2 vols., Chengdu: chubanshe, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 128-29; Gansusheng bowuguan et al. ed., *Wuwei Handai yijian*, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1975; Zhang Zhongjing's (i.e. 張機 150-219 CE) works: the *Shanghan lun* (傷寒論,

important animal sacrifice was in ancient China. What follows next is a brief description of meat consumption in early Chinese society.

There is no doubt that the early Chinese, like many other peoples, consumed meat, occasionally including human flesh.⁷⁰ However, there were only a small number of people privileged to eat meat as part of their daily diet, and for all other people, vegetables and grains were their main food, with meat being only an occasional indulgence.⁷¹ This occasional enjoyment of meat came with sickness and old age, as suggested by Mencius.⁷² The reasons for this division are both socio-political and economic, and do not advantage the commoners. We find that in the Qin legal code, two specific punishments were prescribed for stealing money to buy meat and eat it together with one's wife and children.⁷³ Even in the apparently prosperous Western Han, for ordinary people to eat fine rice with meat was considered by government officials to constitute a life of luxury.⁷⁴ This also confirms evidence in another work that in the Han, the diet of the poor was basically vegetarian.⁷⁵

At least in the Chunqiu period (722-481BCE) eating meat seems to have been a privilege of all nobles and a symbol of the aristocracy. People who were privileged to eat meat were members of the ruling class,

Shanghai renming chubanshe, 1976) and the *Jinkui yaolue fanglun* (金匱要略方論, collected by Wang Shuhe 王叔和 of the Western Jin dynasty, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1973. No study has been made on the use of animals in ancient Chinese folk religion and cults. For primary sources, see the text called *zajin fang* (雜禁方, 'miscellany of forbidden prescriptions') in the *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* vol. 4, p. 112; FSTYJS (dianli) 8: 314; *Bowu zhi jiaozheng* (yiwen), p. 141, etc. The practice of using some parts of animals as well as eggs in beauty treatment can be dated back to the end of the third and the beginning of the second century BCE, see MHB, vol. 4, p. 102.

⁷⁰ There is evidence showing that in war, famine or due to filial piety, the early Chinese occasionally ate human flesh. On this particular subject, the reader is referred to Key Ray Chong's work, *Cannibalism in China* (New Hampshire: Longwood Academic, 1990). This practice seems to have existed in ancient India as well, see ZPYJ, T. 4, pp. 503c-504a.

⁷¹ In the *Mozi* people were asked to store up vegetables and grains in case there was a flood, a drought, or a bad harvest, MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4)ciguo 1: 20.

⁷² LJJJ (zaji) 41: 1101, (sangdaji) 43:1158.

⁷³ *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian*, p. 158.

⁷⁴ *Yantie lun jiaozhu* (Wang Liqi, Beijing: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1958) lunzhai 54: 194.

⁷⁵ *Qianhan ji*, SBCK 2/7a.

including the king, feudal lords, ministers and literati (i.e. *shi* 士: a government official who gained position through learning).⁷⁶ All these people are called *roushizhe* (肉食者 ‘meat-eater’) in two passages of the *Zuozhuan*.⁷⁷ The positions enabling their holders to eat meat were referred to as the ‘emoluments of office that afford meat eating’ (食肉之祿).⁷⁸ It is this attractive position and its privileges that became the dream that many people strived for. An anecdote of the Han even depicts a person who cared more about this privilege than about an advanced age, for, according to him, he would be quite content with the status of having meat to eat and being noble even if it meant that he could only live for forty-three years.⁷⁹

There is plenty of evidence indicating that early Chinese nobles consumed a variety of meat.⁸⁰ In a Han tomb dated between 175 and 145 BCE, archaeologists found a set of menus that included animal meats, such as hare, dog, pig, deer, ox, and sheep. It also included bird meats like the wild goose, mandarin duck, duck, bamboo chicken, chicken, pheasant, pigeon, turtledove, owl, magpie and sparrow. Fish such as carp, crucial carp, bream, other carps and perch were part of the menus as well. Lastly, eggs together with grains and seeds, fruits, roots, and vegetables were also included.⁸¹ These may explain why many kitchen and feast scenes in mural paintings and stone relief in Han tombs show different kinds of dead animals and fish hanging.⁸² The great variety of meat put on the dining tables of the king and higher-ranking officials are listed in the *Liji* (禮記 ‘book of rituals’). Apart from providing the names of the animals killed for a meal as well as describing in detail how to prepare them in the kitchen, the text claims that the meat eating standards had been inherited from the Zhou dynasty (1046-221BCE).⁸³

⁷⁶ Their ties ‘were marked by the giving and sharing of the meat of sacrifice. The *Mencius* states that Confucius resigned from office simply because the lord of Lu neglected to give him his share of meat from the sacrifice’. Lewis, SVEC, p. 30, MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) gaoziB 12: 492.

⁷⁷ CQZZ zhuangong10: 182, zhaogong 4: 1249, aigong13: 1677.

⁷⁸ CQZZ zhaogong4: 1249.

⁷⁹ SJ 79: 2418.

⁸⁰ For pre-historical evidence on eating meat in the Chinese society, see K.C. Chang, *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 25-83.

⁸¹ Sterckx, ADEC, pp. 28-29.

⁸² Yu Ying-shih, ‘Han food’, *Food in Chinese Culture*, pp. 56-7, 59-62.

⁸³ LJJJ (neize) 27: 744. This text follows the *Lüshi chunqiu* in prescribing how the noble should eat meat according to the change of seasons. It was believed that

Apart from their daily diet, another way of consuming animal meat was to use it in tonic food, since the flesh of some animals was valued above others in tonic terms. The meat of turtles and tortoises, for instance, was highly valued for this reason. The early Chinese believed that turtles were able to tell the past and future through their great age and divine nature. Thus from the Shang period onwards, shells of tortoises and turtles were used as one of the three main materials in divination. Their meat was believed to be a remedy against aging and therefore was often used to make soup.⁸⁴ Several kinds of turtles were eaten by the Chinese, especially the soft-shelled species living in fresh water, as well as sea turtles. The earliest example of eating soup made from turtles can be dated to the seventh century BCE as mentioned by a Warring States text and the *Shiji*.⁸⁵ This belief in the tonic value of turtle meat seems to have been preserved by the Daoist nurturing system in which many other animals are also regarded to be important for extending a human's lifespan.⁸⁶

certain meat was better eaten with a certain grain and vegetables in the appropriate season. For primary sources on this idea, see the beginning of many chapters of the *Lüshi chunqiu*; HNHL fscI. 5; LJJJ (neize) 27: 746-8 (in this text, when to eat what kinds of meat, and how to prepare them are made clear); Cai Yong's (蔡邕 ca.132-192) *Yueling wenda* (月令問答) quoted in the *Shuofu*, SFSZ, vol. 3, pp. 194b-95a.

⁸⁴ Michael Loewe, 'Divination by Shells, Bones, and Stalks during the Han Period' (TP, LXXIV, 1988), pp. 81-118.

⁸⁵ CQZZ, *xuangong* 4: 677-78.

⁸⁶ A Han text, attributed to Dongfang Shuo (東方朔, fl. 1st cent. BCE), contains a tip saying that if one eats five kilograms of the gorilla-like animal's brain accompanied by chrysanthemum, one will live for five hundred years (*Shuofu*, vol. 6, p. 3025a). In his *Baopu zi*, the Daoist master Ge Hong suggests many prescriptions of elixir, quite a few of them need the organs of animals and birds or eggs of chickens as ingredients. Pig fat is also needed. One horrifying suggestion is that the ingredient must be a featherless baby bird, which is prepared by drying it in the dark. In addition, *lingzhi* (靈芝 ganoderma, actually it is kind of dark-brown fungus) was traditionally credited with miraculously tonic and curing power and regarded as a plant of divine medicine. So is it in Daoism. In the same book Ge Hong classifies a few types of ganoderma, one of which is what he called 'flesh ganoderma' (肉芝), animals which are likened to the ganoderma as they are believed to have the effect of prolonging life. Under the *rouzhi* category, he lists ten kinds of animals, which after reaching an age of a thousand years are said to be able to extend people's lives by a thousand years if they are ingested. See, *Baopu zi neipian jiaoshi*, 4: 80-82, 87, 4: 101-102, 11: 210. In Lu Ji's (陸機 261-303) *Yaolan* (要覽) the animal is the ten thousand year old toad, *Shuofu*, vol. 5, p. 2738b. Tao Hongjing also accepted this. See Shafer, 'Eating Turtles in Ancient China', JAOS, 82:1, 1962, pp. 73-4. In another of his books, the *Baopuzi waipian*,

Yet, in general, as an Eastern Jin official says, when the sage rulers of the antiquity ruled a country, there were regulations for eating meat.⁸⁷ Whatever he might have meant by ‘regulations’, they seem to have at least included proscriptions on eating meat on specified occasions. In other words, even for the meat-eaters, there were occasions on which a vegetarian diet was mandatory.

2.2. The Early Chinese Vegetarian Practices

Vegetarian diet in early China was called either *shushi* (蔬/蔬食 ‘food of vegetations’) or *sushi* (素食 ‘plain food’) or in some cases, *caishi* (菜食 ‘food of vegetables’).⁸⁸ According to Zheng Xuan (鄭玄, 127-200), food that consisted of plants and grass (植草 another way of saying vegetables) was called *shushi* (蔬食) and *su* (素) and *shu* (蔬) are two interchangeable characters.⁸⁹ The earliest appearance of this term is in the *Zhuangzi*.⁹⁰ In his *Yiqie jing yiyi* (一切經音義, ‘phonetics and meanings of all the scriptures’), monk Huilin (慧琳 737-820), quoting from Guo Pu’s (郭璞 276-324) commentary and from Ge Hong’s *Zilin* (字林 ‘words forest’), writes all those eatable vegetables are called *shu* (蔬).⁹¹

For privileged meat eaters, there were mainly three main reasons for temporarily or permanently adopting a vegetarian diet: the ritual of the fast prior to a sacrifice, the fast observed during a mourning period, and choosing to take a morally higher ground. The first two reasons were occasions on which they were expected by the tradition or in later time by emperors to observe a vegetarian diet, while the last reason was entirely a voluntary one.

Ge Hong tells us that eating the embryo makes people able to read in the dark, eating young onion seed together with the brain of male cranes also yields such a result (Quoted in the QSGSDQHLCW, vol. 2, p. 2133).

⁸⁷ JS 47: 1324.

⁸⁸ One recent study in Chinese suggests that vegetarianism in ancient China was a result of Monism in the Tang dynasty, which is quite bizarre. See Rui Chuanming 芮传明, ‘Lun gudai zhongguo de “chicai” xinyang’ 论古代中国的“吃菜”信仰, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中华文史论丛, 63, 2000, pp. 1-17.

⁸⁹ MZXG (ZZJC, vol.4) ciguo 1: 20.

⁹⁰ ‘dieting on vegetarian food and wandering far and wide, just like an un tightened boat 蔬食而遨游, 泛若不系之舟’, *Zhuangzi jijie* [莊子集解], p.85.

⁹¹ T. 54, pp. 625c, 750c.

Fasting was called *zhaijie* (齋戒) in early China. According to Han Kangbo (韓康伯 332-380), *zhai* is so called because it is used to cleanse one's mind, and *jie* is to guard against peril (洗心曰齋, 防患曰戒).⁹² A slightly different meaning is expressed in a Han dictionary in which the *zhai* is explained as 'to protect cleanliness' (戒潔).⁹³ Despite the fact that *zhaijie* can be used for other purposes,⁹⁴ one of its major functions is said to be a means through which people communicate with ghosts and gods (i.e. 齋戒以告鬼神).⁹⁵ This function is more explicitly expressed in the *Mozi*: '[if] the son of Heaven is ill or troubled by some spirits, [he] has to perform *zhaijie*, and make himself clean by bathing, [then] prepares sweet wines and various kinds of grains to sacrifice to Heaven. As for ghosts, Heaven is able to get rid of them (天子有疾病禍祟, 必齋戒, 沐浴潔, 為酒醴粢盛, 以祭祀天。鬼則天能除去之)'.⁹⁶ This can again be confirmed by a passage in the *Shiji*, which says that the Duke of Zhou performed a *zhai* when King Wu was ill.⁹⁷ Apart from the occasion of the ruler's sickness, the *Lüshi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋 'annual of mister Lü') and the *Liji* also say that *zhai* was supposed to be observed by the ruler at the beginning of every season before he made sacrifices.⁹⁸ In fact, *zhaijie* seems to be the very preliminary action of sacrifice. It was believed to be so crucial and powerful that even a vile person who observes it could be legitimised to make sacrifices to Heaven.⁹⁹

⁹² *Yiqie jing yinyi*, T. 54, p. 698c.

⁹³ SWJZ 1A: 8a. For discussions of *zhai*'s early meanings and usages and of the *zhaijie* practice described in early texts, see Roman Malek, *Das Chai-chieh lu: Materialien zur Liturgie im Taoismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang 1985), pp. 7-34.

⁹⁴ Strangely enough, in the early Han, *zhaijie* was also advised by medical doctors to be observed for removing old scars from the skin. See WSEBF, pp. 35, 102. And in a few cases the requirement of a vegetarian diet for medical purposes was specifically stipulated. See *Wuwei Handai yishu*, pp. 6a, 16b.

⁹⁵ LJJ (quli A) 2: 46.

⁹⁶ MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4) tianzhiB 7: 123. An early Han text even attributes the flood in the Song state, which is mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* (CQQZ zhuangong10: 188), to Heaven's punishment for not observing *zhaijie*, *Hanshi waizhuan jishi*, 3: 99.

⁹⁷ SJ 4: 131.

⁹⁸ LSCQJS, the beginning of fascicle one, four, seven and ten; LJJ (yueling) fascicle 15-18.

⁹⁹ MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) gaoziA 11: 343.

Whatever the occasion, the nature of *zhaijie* seems to restrain one from desires and enjoyment. This is clearly stated in the *Liji*: ‘*zhaijie* is meant to tidy up the mind and the body, to guard against their evil tendencies, and to cut off desires; ears should not listen to music, the mind should not have distracting thoughts, hands and feet should not move disorderly’ (齋，齊整身心，防其邪物，絕其嗜欲，耳不聽樂，心不苟慮，手足不亂動).¹⁰⁰

The protocol for performing the *Zhai* ritual can be inferred from a dialogue between Confucius and his disciples created by the author of the *Zhuangzi*. Yan Hui (顏回) was said to be so poor that he had not eaten meat nor drunk alcohol for months. Someone then asked Confucius ‘Is this enough for performing the *zhai*?’,¹⁰¹ Although the author of the *Zhuangzi* made Confucius reply from a rather philosophical perspective that what Yan Hui did could only be considered to be ‘sacrificial fast’ (祭祀齋) not ‘mental fast’ (心齋), it is not difficult to deduce that a preparatory element of the *zhai* under normal circumstances is a vegetarian diet,¹⁰² which incidentally agrees with the passage quoted above from the *Mozi*. This may be what Confucius meant when he said ‘to observe *zhai* one has to change food (齋必變食)’.¹⁰³ A typical example of restriction to vegetarian food while fasting is provided by the *Hanshu* in which a passage describes how the usurper, Wang Mang (王莽 45 BCE-23 CE), before he took over the throne from the Liu clan, fasted and also adopted a vegetarian diet whenever there was a flood or drought in the country.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ LJJJ (jiyi) 46: 1239. The *Lüshi chunqiu* has a similar requirement for *junzi* who took the *zhai* ritual: ‘A gentleman fasts and observes vigils, makes sure to stay deep inside his house, and keeps his body utterly still. He refrains from music and sex, eschews association with his wife, maintains a sparse diet, and avoids use of piquant condiments. He settles the vital energies of his mind, maintains quietude within his various bodily organs and engages in no rash undertaking. He does all these things in order to assure the completion of the first traces of the yin’. See LSCQJS (zhongxiayi)5: 242. This is also repeated in a brief form in another place (11: 568). The translation is from John Knoblock & Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press 2000), p. 135.

¹⁰¹ ZZJJ (ZZJC, vol. 3) renjianshi 1: 23.

¹⁰² Both the *zhai* ritual and the *xinzhai* tradition were absorbed into Daoist ritual system. For details, see Zhang Zehong, *Daojiao shenxian xinyang yu jisi yishi*, Taiwan: Wenjin chubanshe, 2003.

¹⁰³ LYZY (ZZJC vol. 1) xiangdang 13: 219. Zhu Xi explained the change of food as ‘not to drink alcohol’, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 5: 119.

¹⁰⁴ HS 99A: 4050.

The second occasion in which the elite were asked to eat vegetarian food was during the mourning ritual, another type of *zhaijie*. The earliest confirmation of this practice of observing a vegetarian diet in the three-year mourning appears in the *Mencius*.¹⁰⁵ Filial piety is a central concept of Confucian thought, and particularly for a gentleman, filial respect is paramount among the hundred deeds that a gentleman is supposed to perform.¹⁰⁶ To be filial, one not only need to fully obey one's parents when they are alive, but also follow the strict procedure of the mourning ritual which constitutes mainly of the *zhaijie* for approximately three years after their death.¹⁰⁷

It has been suggested that abstaining from eating meat is compulsory during the mourning ritual because abstinence is way of accumulating merit for oneself and one's late parents.¹⁰⁸ However, this suggestion contradicts the fact that the belief in the accumulation of merit was totally absent in Chinese culture until the arrival of Buddhism, and that the mourning ritual greatly predates the arrival in China of the Indian concept of accumulating merit through performing meritorious deeds. Abstinence

¹⁰⁵ 'I have not studied the Rites for a Feudal Lord although I have heard of it: in the Three Dynasties from the Son of Heaven down to commoners all shared the practices of wearing mourning clothes and eating porridge and gruel during the three-year mourning', MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) *tengwengong*A 5: 190. Mo Di regarded this practice as senseless because it wasted people's time and wealth, MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4) *jiezang*C 6: 104-117.

¹⁰⁶ This idea is expressed in the phrase '孝為百行之首' of which the earliest appearance seems to be in Zheng Xuan's *Xiaojing zhushu xu* (孝經注疏序, SBBY 1a). For the references to the hundred deeds of a gentleman, see SYSZ (tancong)16: 468; FSTYJS (shifan)5: 174. On the other hand, according to the *Shangshu* (商書), which is quoted in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, being unfilial is the gravest category of all offences: 'of the three hundreds crimes, no crime is bigger than not being filial (刑三百, 罪莫重於不孝)'. See LSCQJS (xiaoxing) 14: 732.

¹⁰⁷ A book called *shu* (書) quoted in the *Lunyu* suggests that the tradition of three-year mourning was practised since the Western Zhou (LYZY [ZZJC vol.1] *xianwen* 17: 326), which can be attested by the *Yijing* (易經) and the *Shangshu*. See S. J. Marshall, *The Mandate of Heaven: Hidden History in the I Ching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 179, n. 13; *Shangshu yizhu* (Wang Shishun, Sichuan renmin chubanshe), pp. 215-220; XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) *lilun* 13: 246-47. For a study of filial piety in the *Shijing* and *Shangshu*, see Harry Hsin-I Hsiao's 'Concepts of Hsiao (filial piety) in the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Classic of Documents*' (*Xianggang zhongwen daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao*, 10:2, 1979), pp. 425-443.

¹⁰⁸ Lin Boqian, 'Beichuan fojiao yu Zhongguo sushi wenhua', p. 114.

from eating meat was once also observed in the mourning over one's grave loss. In one commentary to the chronicle *Chunqiu* (春秋 'spring and autumn'), the ruler of the Qi State (齊國) is said to have stopped drinking wine and eating meat for seven years because he was defeated in battle by another state and lost some of his land.¹⁰⁹ This behaviour, in fact, was interpreted as equivalent to a filial offspring's mourning over his parents' deaths.¹¹⁰ Another explanation of vegetarianism during mourning was suggested by Yan Zhitui, being in accordance what is advocated in the *Liji*, saying that the time when one's parents die is a time for grief and mourning, not for enjoyment.¹¹¹ Eating meat is an enjoyable luxury and therefore should be temporarily suspended.¹¹² Moreover, the link between *ren* and *xiao* in the Han times could provide additional justification.¹¹³ To be filial (*xiao*), one must be kind and benevolent (*ren*). Eating meat involves killing animals, which violates the principle of *ren*, as much as *xiao*.

The procedure of the mourning ritual varied according to the social status of the individual observing it, all described in great detail in the ritual classics, the *Liji* and the *Yili* (儀禮 'ceremonial rituals').¹¹⁴ Later, the mourning ritual was hijacked by Emperor Xiaowen (孝文, i.e. 劉恆 202-157BCE) of the Han dynasty. Before he died, he issued an edict forbidding all the people in the country from the day he died to the day he was buried to marry, eat meat, drink alcohol, and perform sacrifices.¹¹⁵ Although this did not become a tradition, a similar edict was issued a few times during the Six Dynasties.¹¹⁶ Thus, by observing this rule and reporting violators it became a channel through which moralists gained favour with the ruler.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan jigū*, SBCK (chenggong8) 6b. His remorseful behaviour was explained by a Jin person as that he did so because he was ashamed of losing his territories. See JS 71: 1887.

¹¹⁰ LJJJ (jianchuan) 55: 1365.

¹¹¹ YSJXJJ 2: 113, Cf. LJJJ (tangongA) 7: 170;

¹¹² To my knowledge, this tradition is still alive today.

¹¹³ The idea of *ren* developed in the Zhou dynasty, and then meant generally 'kindness' or 'gentle' etc. That it definitely means kindness was in the Chunqiu period when Confucius explained it through filial piety. For a study of this, see Yang Hanqing, 'Guanyu dao ren liangge guannian yuanyuan de kaocha' (*Shehui kexue yanjiu* 5, 1997), p. 67.

¹¹⁴ LJJJ (tangongB) 10: 245, 43: 1157, 54: 1349, 55: 1365; *Yili zhushu* SBCK 11: 2a; *Baihu tongde lun*, SBCK 10: 66; HS 8: 2334.

¹¹⁵ SJ 10: 434; HS 4: 132; JS 20: 621.

¹¹⁶ HS 68: 2944; JS 20: 621, 105: 1275.

¹¹⁷ JS 33: 995; ZS 12: 190; BS 58: 2089.

According to the *Liji*, whoever the object of the mourning was, being vegetarian was definitely compulsory unless one was ill.¹¹⁸ One interesting case shows that this ritual could be performed for the death of one's contemporary. The first emperor of the Eastern Han, Liu Xiu (劉秀 r. 25-56), stopped eating meat and drinking alcohol for days to mourn the death of one of his vassals.¹¹⁹ Those who genuinely grieved during the mourning period but continued to eat meat and drink alcohol were regarded to be in breach of the code of the ritual thereby unacceptable.¹²⁰

This practice of abstaining from eating meat during the mourning period for one's parents continued to be observed even more strictly in the successive dynasties. From the *Houhan shu* onwards, those gentlemen who duly performed the mourning ritual for the death of their relatives were recorded. Starting with the *Jinshu* most of the standard dynastic histories have a section recording filial individuals, amongst whom many eventually became vegetarian for the rest of their lives.¹²¹ Some of them were so strict that when they heard that their parents were missing in wartime, they immediately stopped eating meat, and started to mourn. Quite a few even started from a very young age.¹²² One interesting example is of a person who not only stopped eating meat but also stopped using knives,¹²³ which suggests abstaining from eating meat indeed is linked with the virtue of *belevolence* (ren)—the opposite of violence.

The third reason for the privileged classes to take on a vegetarian diet was to cultivate the virtuous quality which might have been derived from other admiration of one's being content and happy with little and of frugality.¹²⁴ The earliest record that shows an emphasis on frugality among the early Chinese seems to be the 'Imperial Decree to Travellers of the Four Directions' (告四方遊旅), in which King Wen of the Zhou dynasty

¹¹⁸ LJJJ (tangongB)10: 245, (sangdaji) 43: 1155-57, (quliA) 3: 76, (tangongA) 8: 191.

¹¹⁹ *Dongguan hanji jiaozhu*, 9:312.

¹²⁰ For example, see HHS 83: 2773.

¹²¹ BS 24: 879; SS 92: 2265, 2268; WS 43: 977, 57: 1271, 59: 1314; LS, 27: 410, 30: 446, 40: 568, 43: 608, 47: 648, 47: 653, 53: 769; NS 73: 1801, CS 19: 257, 32: 430, etc.

¹²² SS 63: 1675, 95: 2243; NQS 54: 942, 945, 956, 962; LS 47: 653, BS 33: 1233; CS 26: 326, 27: 349, 32: 424.

¹²³ LS 43: 609.

¹²⁴ Being content with little is the spirit of Buddhist Vinaya rules. Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism*, p. 88.

says: ‘vehicles should not be decorated, people should not eat meat, domestic animals should not eat grains...’¹²⁵ Understandably this edict was issued on an occasion when a drought hit the country.

It seems certain that almost every school of classical Chinese thoughts advocated frugality as an important virtue. Mo Di (墨翟 ca. b. 468BCE) was the most famous exponent of this virtue: a whole section of his work advises the ruler to be frugal.¹²⁶ Confucius also encouraged people to be content with little. He praised both those who were poor but did not complain about their status and those who were rich but lived a simple life.¹²⁷ It might be that from the appreciation of frugality came the sense of a moral high ground for those living a simple life, including the practice of vegetarianism. From a verse of the *Shijing* (詩經 ‘classic of poetry’) we can see that the *junzi*, the Confucian model for ordinary people, was supposed to eat vegetarian food.¹²⁸ This was put in a different way by Zeng Zi (曾子 505-436BCE).¹²⁹ Hence, Confucius valued morality more than unlawful and immoral wealth. On one occasion, he was recorded to have said, ‘eating vegetarian food, drinking water, and curling [my] arms to make a pillow of them can also be enjoyable. To me being rich and noble without justice is like the floating clouds (飯蔬食, 飲水, 曲肱而枕之, 樂亦在其中矣! 不義而富且貴, 於我如浮雲)’.¹³⁰ It is perhaps because of the association of the moral high ground with vegetarianism in early China that such a deed is specially mentioned as a commendable practice in the biographies of many members of the elite. By comparison, according to the records in standard histories, fewer people adopted a vegetarian diet through filial piety than those who did so for moral reasons. This state of affairs changed progressively from the Latter Han onwards,¹³¹

¹²⁵ This piece of writing is traditionally dated to pre-Qin times. QSGSDQHLCW vol. 1, p. 17.

¹²⁶ MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4) ciguo 1: 17-22.

¹²⁷ LYZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) weilinggong 18: 340-41.

¹²⁸ SJJZ (guofeng-fatan), p. 147.

¹²⁹ *Da-Dai Liji*, SBCK 5: 4a.

¹³⁰ LYZY (ZZJC vol. 1) shu-er 8: 142. ‘Being on a vegetarian diet, drinking water’ was a description of the life of the poor people of Western Han in Xun Yue’s (荀悅 148-209) *Qianhan ji* (前漢記), SBCK 2: 7a.

¹³¹ See SJ 129: 3280; HS 91: 3693; HHS 27: 927, 42: 1452, 1459, 52: 1724, 54: 1760; SGZ 12: 375, 13: 403, 14: 430, 39: 979; JS 44: 1263, 75: 1982, 76: 2006, 88: 2279, 2284, 2293, 90: 2343, 94: 2440, 2403, 2443; SS 58: 1592, 61: 1654, 63: 1675, 91: 2243, 92: 2265, 2268, 93: 2280; NS 13: 379. CS, 33: 441; WS 19A: 447; LS 51: 750.

which suggests that the authors of those histories might have thought highly of those who were frugal while having the prestige to enjoy a good life. An indication of how serious some Chinese took the practice of Zhai can be seen in an anecdote recorded in the *Houhan shu*. It says that a member of literati observes the fast almost all year long. Upon seeing his poor health as a result of this, his wife asks why he brings suffering to himself. He gets furious and puts his wife in jail in the name of interrupting his fasting.¹³²

3. Chinese Buddhist Vegetarians prior to the Imperial Campaign for Vegetarianism

It is clear by now that the Chinese vegetarian practices discussed above had mainly been associated with the ritual of *zhaijie*. This section will show that it is this ancient tradition of *zhaijie* that played a prerequisite role for the appearance of Buddhist vegetarian practice, for in Buddhism is too a fast also translated as *zhaijie* and deemed important to serious lay Buddhists. Thus the key cultural element that directly contributed to the appearance of Buddhist vegetarian practice was *zhaijie*, a practice of both Chinese elites and lay Buddhists. To find out how this was possible, we need to analyse briefly the early history of the Chinese Buddhist *zhaijie*.

3.1. The Popularity of the Buddhist *Zhaijie*

The Buddhist fast is properly known as *baguan zhai* (八關齋, ‘eight-fold fast’), so called because eight precepts are supposed to be observed during the fast.¹³³ This fast is taken in different forms in terms of the duration it lasts: a ‘six (-day) fast’ (*liuzhai* 六齋), a ‘long fast’ (*changzhai* 長齋).¹³⁴

¹³² See, HHS, 79B: 2679.

¹³³ The eight precepts are to be avoided: killing, stealing, sexual activity, lying, drinking alcohol, using ornaments and cosmetics, sleeping on luxury beds, and eating meals after midday. See ZJ, T. 1, p. 911a-b. In another text translated in the Three Kingdom period by Zhiqian, the last rule on the list was an additional observation, while the eighth rule became ‘no listening to music or watching dances.’ *Pusa benyuan jing* [菩薩本緣經], T. 3, p. 69b.

¹³⁴ One may argue that a ten-precept *zhai* designed specifically for Bodhisattvas also exists in a Western Jin translation (*Pusa shouzhai jing* 菩薩受齋經, T. 24, pp. 1115c-1116c), but there does not seem to be evidence showing that this *zhai* was ever popular, if practised at all, throughout Chinese Buddhist history.

The *baguan zhai* started life as a religious practice specifically for the laity. It developed alongside a communal activity of the Saṃgha which is called *uposadha/ posadha*, ‘gathering together to confess one’s faults’. According to some Vinaya texts this gathering started under the inspiration of other religious schools and at its early stages the purpose of gathering was not only to repent or confess but also to discuss and preach the dharma or chant sūtras. The exact dates on which the monastics were supposed to gather seem to vary: some Vinaya texts say three days (the eight, fourteenth, and fifteenth days of the month),¹³⁵ while others giving six days (the eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, twenty-third, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth days of the month).¹³⁶ The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya even suggests the three days of the eight, fifteenth, and twenty-third.¹³⁷ The six-day version prevails in the majority of Vinaya texts and all the sūtras. A recent study shows that the six-day version was derived from the three-day version. Namely, the three days are only meant to be ‘every/of half month’ (*pakṣassa/pakkhassa*) as the corresponding phrase in Pāli suttas clearly says so. Thus, the difference in the number of days for the fast is entirely due to the mistake of the Chinese translation: those translations which say three fasting days had missed the phrase of “every/of half month” of the original Indic texts while the translations that say six fasting days had combined the three days of two half-months.¹³⁸

In the Chinese translations, the six-day fast is termed *liuzhai ri* (六齋日) or shortened to *liuzhai*, and the three-day fast the *sanzhai ri* (三齋日) or *sanzhai*. When and why the six particular days began to be used for the laity’s fast is not clear because apart from the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya text which links together the three different days and the observations of

¹³⁵ These three days together with other auspicious days including the Buddhist monthly confession day were mentioned in Aśoka’s Pillar Edict as three full-moon days on which he told people not to do killing. See Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, p. 103.

¹³⁶ SFL, T. 22, pp. 816c-817a; WFL, T. 22, p. 106a, 121b; MHSI, T. 22, pp. 380c, 391c, 392a, 462c; SSL, T. 23, pp. 421a, 420c, 421c. According to other texts, chanting a certain sūtra on these three days will generate a lot of merit. See *Daoxing banruo jing*, T. 8, p. 443c; *Bannihuan jing*, T. 1, p. 188a; *Xiaopin banruo boluomi jing*, T. 8, p. 553. *Naxian biqu jing* (那先比丘經), T. 32, p. 694b.

¹³⁷ T. 23, p. 839a.

¹³⁸ See Chuan Cheng, ‘Fojiao de liuzhai: jianyu Xiao Dengfu xiansheng shangque’ (佛教的六齋日-兼与萧登福先生商榷). *Singaporean Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 1, 2013, pp. 149-154.

the eight precepts for the laity,¹³⁹ no other texts have provided a clue for this conjunction. Yet, from the fact that there are more than one version of a scripture preaching about the fast, the tradition must have come from an old Indian practice. To be precise, it could have been drawn from the common belief that the gods watched humans' behaviour on these six particular days¹⁴⁰ and that to observe the eight precepts is a morally effective way of self-restraint from which the laity has the chance to accumulate merit that will guarantee a happy life in Heaven.¹⁴¹

The *changzhai*, on the other hand, seems to have developed long after the six-day fast became a popular tradition. The earliest mention of the six-day fast occurs in Han translations while the *changzhai* does not appear until later translations.¹⁴² According to Sengyou, this fast is based on the *Zhengzhai jing* (正齋經 'sūtra of correct fasts'), which seems to have been lost.¹⁴³ The third century *Puyao jing* (普曜經 'sūtra of illuminating all') was the first Chinese translation to make this fast known in China. This fast is known as 'long' because it is supposed to be observed continuously in the first half of the first, fifth and ninth month.¹⁴⁴

Both fasts in the Chinese translations are often referred to under the more general term *zhai* ('fast') or *zhaijie* of which the numerous appearances in so many sūtras suggest that they were greatly encouraged

¹³⁹ T. 23, p. 815b, 839a, 843a, 867c

¹⁴⁰ The earliest appearance of the belief in divine inspection on the six days is in two third century translations: LDJJ, T. 3, p. 37a; *Da loutan jing*, T. 1, p. 298b. They were soon followed by later translations: *Zengyi ahan jing*, T. 2, p. 624b-c. DZDL, T. 25, pp. 160a, 516a, MHSL, T. 22, 134b, 134c, 259a; *Chang ahan jing*, T. 1, p. 134b-135a; etc.

¹⁴¹ ZJ, T. 1, p. 12a.

¹⁴² *Zhong benqi jing*, T. 4, p. 157c; *Banzhou sanmei jing*, T. 13, p. 901b. A third century translation is devoted specifically to this practice. See ZJ, T. 1, No. 87; cf. *Baguan zhai jing* (八關齋經), T. 1, No. 89. CGDJ, T. 15, p. 457c. I was told in a conversation by Professor Richard Gombrich that the short-term fast exists in the Theravada tradition as well. I was also informed through email by Dr. Rupert Gethin that in Theravada Buddhism the fast is mainly observed on the new and full moon days.

¹⁴³ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 91a. The existence of this translation can be proved by the fact that Xi Chao quoted it, HMJ, T. 52, p. 87b.

¹⁴⁴ *Puyao jing*, T. 3, p. 533b; *Chuyao jing*, T. 4, pp. 617c, 623c; *Ayuwang xi huaimu yinyuan jing*, T. 50, p. 180a. Unlike in these texts, the phrase *changzhai* unambiguously means 'being permanently on the vegetarian diet' in modern time.

practices in the Buddhist community,¹⁴⁵ so observing the fast is called *fengzhai* [奉齋] which together with the benefit of its observance is too found in Han translations.¹⁴⁶ The use of the term *zhaijie* for these two fasts is more than a loan of terminology from the Chinese traditional *zhaijie* practice, since both the Buddhist and Chinese fasts are the same in the two aspects of eating and the discipline of self-control, although originally in the Buddhist fasts ‘the principal spirit of the practices lies in not eating after midday’ (齋法以過中不食為體) and abstaining from eating meat is not a requirement.¹⁴⁷ The significance of these conceptual and religious similarities can be found in the semi-Buddhist practice of the Latter Han, long before the earliest appearance of the existing Buddhist translations was made in 148 CE. In 65 CE Emperor Ming’s (漢明帝, i.e. 劉莊 r. 57-75) edict to Liu Ying (劉英 fl. 39-71CE) mentions that Liu Ying recited the texts of the Huang Lao tradition and once observed the Buddhist *zhaijie* for three months.¹⁴⁸ It is impossible to know for sure if this three-month *zhaijie* is the same as the three month Buddhist long fast or he simply observed the six-day fast continuously for three months, nor do we know whether Liu Ying was on a vegetarian diet while observing the Buddhist one, but this evidence does confirm that the Buddhist fast were observed in China at a relatively early time.¹⁴⁹ Since the Chinese took Buddhist fasts as traditional Chinese ones and the latter involves abstaining from eating meat, it is tempting to suggest that they

¹⁴⁵ The reference of *zhaijie* as the Buddhist fast occurs in many early translations, e.g.: the *Foshuo qingjing pingdeng jue jing* (佛說無量清淨平等覺經, attr. to Lokakṣema), T. 12, p. 293a; *Foshuo Amituo sanyesafo saloufotan guodu rendao jing* (佛說阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經 trsl. Zhi Qian), T. 12, p. 310a; *Chang ahan jing*, T. 1, p. 134b; etc.

¹⁴⁶ For instance, see the *Zhong benqi jing* [T. 4, p. 153b] which describes how a Brahmin was reborn as a tree god endowed with marvelous powers and fortune as a result of his previous life’s observing the *baguan zhai* which was unfortunately interrupted by his wife.

¹⁴⁷ *Da fangbian fo bo-en jing* (大方便佛報恩經), T. 3, p. 159c; *Sapoduo pini piposha* (薩婆多毘尼毘娑沙), T. 23, p. 508c. This feature is also reflected in the *Zhong benqi jing*, T. 4, pp. 156c-57c.

¹⁴⁸ HHS 42: 1428. Many passages of the *Taiping jing* indicate the Later Han Daoists also practised *Zhaijie*.

¹⁴⁹ Another case of observing the long fast is said to have happened in the Western Jin dynasty (西晉 256-316). A miracle story tells of the mother of a Buddhist translator by the name of Wei Shidu (衛士度, fl.ca. 290-305) who constantly practised *changzhai* and read Buddhist scriptures. See YY 5: 49, FYZL, T. 53, p. 572c.

incorporated the vegetarian practice too. Not until the second half of the fourth century was there affirmative evidence showing that the fasts observed by the Buddhists requires the observer to abstain from eating meat. The evidence is found in the fervent Buddhist Xi Chao's *Fengfa yao* in which a sentence reads 'on all the fast days, (one) should eat neither fish nor meat and should eat before midday' (凡齋日皆當魚肉不御, 迎中而食).¹⁵⁰

Xi Chao did not just write so, he seems to have practised what he preached. The *Jinshu* states that all those who associated with him were leading intellectuals of their time, and that he was fond of the prominent monk Zhi Dun (支遁, i.e. 支道林, 314-366).¹⁵¹ The *Gaoseng zhuan* (高僧傳, 'biographies of eminent monks' compiled by Shi Huijiao 釋慧皎, 497-554) says that he often associated with monks and some pious and active lay Buddhists among whom Xie Fu (謝敷 fl. middle of 4th cent.) was the most famous.¹⁵² Xie was said to have observed the long-term fast while he lived as a hermit before he took up an official post.¹⁵³ The same book also mentions that after the Western Jin, over a dozen high-ranking officials and literati became active Buddhists, regularly gathering together and observing these two fasts.¹⁵⁴ This record can be verified by the works of Zhi Dun, who left us three poems written about two gatherings on which quite a number of the laity as well as the monks were observing both short and long fasts.¹⁵⁵

The frequent references to the Buddhist fasts in histories such as the *Jinshu*, *Songshu*, *Nanshi*, *Nanqi shu*, *Weishu*, etc. suggest that since the Eastern Jin, particularly after the Liu Song dynasty, the eight-fold fast, (of

¹⁵⁰ T. 52, p. 86b. At least two Six Dynasties texts of Daoist precepts also prescribe that the food during a fast should be vegetarian. See *Taizhen ke* (太真科) quoted in the *Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao* (要修科儀戒律鈔), DZ. 205, 12:1a-b; *Laojun yinsong jiejing*, DZ. 562, 7b.

¹⁵¹ JS 67: 1804-5.

¹⁵² For Xie's Buddhist life, see Ji Zhichang, 'Dongjin jushi Xie Fu kao' (*Hanxue yanjiu*, 20:1, 2002), 55-83.

¹⁵³ *Shishuo xinyu* (qiyi), vol. 1, 3a, 14a. His biography in the *Jinshu* (94: 2456-57) mentions only that he spent his early life as a hermit on Mt Taiping.

¹⁵⁴ GSZ, T. 50, p. 367c.

¹⁵⁵ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 350a-b. Zhi Dun composed a poem entitled 'the poem of the fifth month when one observes the long fast' (五月長齋詩), GHMJ, T. 52, p. 350a. This can be attested by another source which mentions a certain Buddhist Zhou Dang of the Eastern Jin observed the first month *changzhai* (正月長齋) and the one-day fast (FYZL, T. 53, 417c quoted from the MXJ).

which the observer is called a Bodhisattva in a Western Jin translation¹⁵⁶), became popular in different strata of society (including emperors and their close officials) first in southern and then in northern China.¹⁵⁷ The fast was observed on various occasions, including the birthday and enlightenment day of the Buddha.¹⁵⁸ Buddhists like Liu Qiu (劉虬 438-495) and He Youyu (何幼璵 d. ca. 502) were known to be constant practitioners of the long fast,¹⁵⁹ though quite often the occasion of a Buddhist fast appears to have been a large-scale banquet,¹⁶⁰ showing that the practice was an individual as well as a social one.

The popularity of the fasts might have had something to do with encouragement from various emperors. For instance, Emperor Ming (宋明帝 i.e. Liu Yu 劉彧, r. 465-472) of the Liu Song dynasty, who was a known vegetarian, may have been the first Chinese emperor to take the Bodhisattva ordination, and seems to have been a regular practitioner of the eight-fold fast. An anecdote indicates that he was at times very serious about this religious practice. Once when he and some of his officials were observing the fast, he dismissed a eunuch from his position because the latter secretly ate fish and meat after midday.¹⁶¹ This further confirms that the Buddhist fasts were influenced by the traditional Chinese fast and required abstaining from eating meat.

3.2. The Circulation of the *Da banniepan jing*

As outlined earlier, the Eastern Jin and Liu Song dynasties saw a steady increase in translations containing more concrete and varied arguments against eating meat. Among these translations, the most influential one is

¹⁵⁶ *Chixin fantian suowen jing* (持心梵天所問經), T. 15, p. 17b.

¹⁵⁷ WS 19B: 510, 38: 877, 90: 1931, BS 88: 2910, CS 21: 282, 26: 337. Also see Tang Yongtong, *Hanwei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, pp. 328-9; Ogasawara Senshu 'Chūgoku Chūko Bukkyō Seikatsu' (*Indian and Buddhist Studies*, 2: 1), p. 68; Liu Shufen, 'Wu zhi liu shiji Huabei xiangcun de fojiao xinyang' (ZYLYYJ, 63: 3, 1993), p. 531.

¹⁵⁸ This information was found in the version of the *Jingchu suishi ji* which is preserved in a Japanese collection, quoted in Liu Shufen, 'Wu zhi liu shiji Huabei xiangcun de fojiao xinyang', pp. 532, 533.

¹⁵⁹ NQS 54: 939, 55: 962.

¹⁶⁰ For a brief discussion of this phenomenon, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, (Franciscus Verellen, trsl., New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 257-9.

¹⁶¹ SS 89: 2229.

the *Da bannihuan jing* (the earliest Chinese translation of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*). In this text the Buddha is found for the first time to issue the rule of not eating meat because it destroys the root of compassion.¹⁶² The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* was considered to be one of the most important sūtras by Kumārajīva.¹⁶³ Soon after the text was first translated into Chinese, the concept of *niepan* (‘nirvāṇa’) became a popular subject of philosophical debates and most studies. Shi Sengzhao (釋僧肇 ca. 374-414), a leading disciple of Kumārajīva, especially composed a work entitled *Niepan wuming lun* (涅槃無名論 ‘treatise on the nameless of nirvāṇa’) to expound the idea of *niepan*. In the meantime, another chief disciple of Kumārajīva, Daosheng (道生 355-434), became the most controversial figure involved in a debate over certain points in the *Da bannihuan jing*. Daosheng disagreed with the idea that people with no faith in Buddhism could not obtain Buddhahood, which was said to have caused him being thrown out of his monastery. His view, however, was later proven right by the translation of the longer and later version of the text, the *Da banniepan jing*.¹⁶⁴ This event as well as the newly translated text attracted the attention of many elite monks and literati of the time and stimulated a large number of commentaries, which in turn encouraged the rapidly growing influence of the text and its doctrine of vegetarianism in the fifth and sixth centuries of Chinese society.¹⁶⁵ This no doubt also made the devoted lay Buddhists as well as the monastics more conscientious in regards to the issue of eating meat.

3.3. Vegetarians in the Saṃgha

With the appearance of lay Buddhists being vegetarian for Buddhist causes, the members of the Saṃgha should no doubt had or eventually been forced to set examples. The first appearance of permanent vegetarian monks seems to have been in the Western Jin. The earliest Chinese Buddhist monk recorded to have been vegetarian was Zhu Sengxian (竺僧顯, fl.

¹⁶² T. 12, p. 868c.

¹⁶³ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 42a. T. 45, p. 157a-161b.

¹⁶⁴ At least Daosheng’s two works on *niepan* were mentioned by Sengyou (CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 83a). For his biography, see CSZJJ, T. 55, pp. 110c-111a. For the later elaborated story about Daosheng and the debate, see Zhenjing Shi, ‘The Formation and Transformation of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra’, pp. 239-40.

¹⁶⁵ Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty had all the commentaries collected, and then had them translated and sent as a state gift to a Turki king. See Zhenjing Shi, ‘The Formation and Transformation of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra’, pp. 239-43.

early 4th cent.) who was said to have lived a simple and eremitic lifestyle before the final years of the Taixin period (318-321).¹⁶⁶ Eremitism has a long tradition in China, but there is no evidence that those hermits followed a vegetarian diet.¹⁶⁷ Asceticism in Buddhism is not objected to, and the exemplary disciple praised by the Buddha for living a simple and solitary life and practising extreme austerity was Mahākāśyapa, who is said in some translations to have avoided eating meat.¹⁶⁸

The increase in vegetarianism-promoting translations led to the popularity of fasts and to the growth of the number of vegetarian monastics, although it was still unknown to some members of the general public that Buddhist monks should be vegetarian.¹⁶⁹ In the Eastern Jin and Liu Song dynasties, nineteen eminent monks and nuns were said to have been vegetarians.¹⁷⁰ Among them, Tanlong (曇隆 d. 425) and Daoliu (道流, fl. 406) were described by their famous poet contemporary, Xie Lingyun (謝靈運 385-433), who was said to have been a close associate of the monks, even mentioning them in one of his works and writing an essay in memory of Tanlong.¹⁷¹ They might also be the monks who were

¹⁶⁶ GSZ, T. 50, p. 395b-c.

¹⁶⁷ For a thorough study of the origins of eremitism in Chinese culture, see Aat Vervorm 'The Origins of Chinese Eremitism' (*Xianggang zhongwen daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao*, 15, 1984), pp. 249-95. and Alan J. Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement: the Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000. For a brief general survey, see Jordan Paper, 'Eremitism in China' (*Journal of Australian Asiatic Studies*, XXXIV, 1, 1999), pp. 46-55. For early Daoist asceticism, see Stephen Eskildsen, *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion*, State University of New York Press, 1998.

¹⁶⁸ *Yangjuemoluo jing*, T. 2, p. 521b. In the *Da banniepan jing* and the dubious *Da fangbian huayan shi-e pin jing*, Mahākāśyapa is made the one who urged the Buddha to prohibit *monastics* from eating meat. The important role assigned to him by later Mahāyāna texts has been viewed. See Jonathan A. Silk 'Dressed for Success: the Monk Kāśyapa and Strategies of Legitimation in Earlier Mahāyāna Buddhist Scriptures' (*Journal Asiatique* 291.1-2 2003), pp. 173-219.

¹⁶⁹ An Eastern Jin official's memorial, intended to inform the emperor how bad some *monastics* were, only refers to the five principal rules and does not mention vegetarianism, JS 64: 1733.

¹⁷⁰ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 50c; GSZ, T. 50, pp. 349c, 354b, 362a, 365a, 370a, 389c, 395b, 396c, 404a, 410b, 413c, 935b, 936a, 936b, FYZL (quoted from the MXJ), T. 53, pp. 331b, 331c, 677c, 905a.

¹⁷¹ *Xie Lingyun ji* (Li Fuyun ed., Yuelu shushe, 1999) 4: 259, 7: 368-78. Xie Lingyun's contemporary Daoliu was staying in a monastery called Taisi 臺寺

referred to by Shen Yue of the Liang dynasty as having taken up vegetarianism voluntarily before the translation of the *Da bannihuan jing*.¹⁷² After circulation of the *Da banniepan jing* began, more monks and nuns followed their examples and became vegetarians.¹⁷³ Also described in the writings of Shen Yue, the nun Jingxiu (淨秀, 415-504) became a vegetarian because she heard that the *Niepan jing* prohibits the eating of meat.¹⁷⁴ In addition, the foreign translator Buddhabadra (佛駄跋陀羅, d.429) was said to have been a strict vegetarian.¹⁷⁵ There were also monks who adopted vegetarianism either because they practised esoteric formulas (dhāraṇī)¹⁷⁶ or because they had never been able to tolerate meat.¹⁷⁷ Some monks were so determined to observe vegetarianism that they showed no fear of life-threatening natural causes nor did they show fear of the emperor who forced them to eat meat.¹⁷⁸

(GSZ, T. 50, p. 373b). According to the GSZ (T. 50, p. 332b, also quoted in *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, T. 51, p. 15b), a certain Faliu was a contemporary of Sengzhao, both studied under the guidance of Kumārajīva. Tang Yongtong rightly suggests that Faliu was Daoliu. See Tang Yongtong, *Hanwei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, p. 439.

¹⁷² *Jiujing cibei lun*, GHMJ, T. 52, p. 270b.

¹⁷³ T. 50, p. 339b, 363a, 367a, 368b, 371c, 372a, 378a, 396c, 398c, 400a, 400c, 401a, 401b, 404b, 406b, 407b, 407c, 408b, 408c, 410c, 416c, 416c; 938b, 940b, 947a.

¹⁷⁴ *Nanqi Chanlinsi ni Jingxiu xingzhuang* (南齊禪林寺尼淨秀行狀) in the GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 270b-72a. This is said to have been used by Baochang in his *Biqiuni zhuan*. See Wu Jifei, 'Biqiuni zhuan yanjiu' (*Faguang xuetan* 4, 1999), p. 112.

¹⁷⁵ T. 50, p. 345a.

¹⁷⁶ T. 50, 398c, 407c.

¹⁷⁷ T. 50, 404c. This, however, does not show that all monks were convinced that eating meat was not acceptable. An interesting case is about the official Xie Hongwei (謝弘微, 392-433), likely to be a Buddhist, who continued to be vegetarian after the mourning over his parents' death. Xie invited the controversial monk Huilin (慧琳 fl. early 5th cent.), who was deeply involved in politics, to a meal. The monk not only ate meat himself, but also persuaded Xie to eat meat on the grounds that the reason why Xie looked so thin was because he ate only vegetarian food! (SS 58: 1592). Again, it was recorded in the historic book that emperor Fei of Liusong (劉昱, 463-477) stole a dog from a Buddhist temple, and the abbot of the temple named Tandu (曇度) cooked it for him (NS 3: 89).

¹⁷⁸ For instance, see Fayuan's (法願, fl. 470) and Zhisong's (智嵩, fl. 421) life stories: GSZ, T. 50, pp. 416c-17a. The latter happened to be an assistant of Dharmakṣema in translating the *Da banniepan jing*, see WS 114:3032.

3.4. The Influence of the Buddhist Vegetarian Literati

Like the number of vegetarian monastics, the number of vegetarian laymen also grew rapidly.¹⁷⁹ Just before the Liu Song dynasty, a group of nine literati including Zhou Xuzhi (周續之 337-423) and eight other scholars studied with Huiyuan (慧遠 333-416) on Mount Lu. In Huiyuan's biography, no mention is made about his being a vegetarian, but as he led the laity surrounding him in observing *zhaijie* and as the biographies of some of these laity clearly mention, they were permanently on a vegetarian diet.¹⁸⁰ Knowing this, it seems highly probable that vegetarianism was practised in that monastery. A scholar such as Shen Daoqian (沈道潛 359-449) whose family had been Buddhists for generations is said to have started on a vegetarian diet when he was elderly around 425.¹⁸¹ According to the *Weishu*, Buddhist vegetarian food was spoken of in contrast to meat meals around the middle of the fifth century in northern China.¹⁸²

Vegetarianism continued in the Liu Song, Qi and Liang dynasties when emperors joined the vegetarian movement. Emperor Wen of the Liu Song (宋文帝 i.e. Liu Yilong 刘义隆, 407-453), for instance, specifically consulted a foreign monk about vegetarianism (which will be dealt with later in this chapter), and the second emperor of the Qi dynasty, Xiao Ze, also tried to avoid eating meat. Again, Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty, to whom we will return later, was also an extreme vegetarian.¹⁸³ However, it should be pointed out that not all emperors were fond of the practice. The first emperor of Northern Zhou, Yu Wenyong (宇文邕, 543-578) who persecuted Buddhism, for instance, even tried to persuade a former monk to eat meat and drink alcohol.¹⁸⁴

Royal participation in such a Buddhist practice could be an influential factor causing more and more literati and officials to become vegetarians

¹⁷⁹ The efforts of lay Buddhists in promoting vegetarianism in this period has been the subject of Valérie Lavoix's article 'La contribution des laïcs au végétarisme: croisades et polémiques en Chine du sud autour de l'an 500' in Catherine Despeux ed., *Bodhdhisme et letters dans la Chine médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2002), pp. 103-143.

¹⁸⁰ SS 92: 2280,

¹⁸¹ SS 93: 2292.

¹⁸² WS 19A: 444.

¹⁸³ It is believed that the emperor's faith in filial piety helped him to develop his vegetarian habit, see Janousch, 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual', pp. 134-156.

¹⁸⁴ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 155c.

during the fifth and sixth century. Historical records of this period mention that the literati were extreme in observing vegetarianism during the mourning ritual.¹⁸⁵ Many of them, including Buddhists and non-Buddhists, simply continued as vegetarians after the period of mourning ended, sometimes assuming a lifestyle more austere than Buddhist monks.¹⁸⁶ A few members of the literati from Northern China even held that being a Buddhist meant being a vegetarian.¹⁸⁷

Among the Buddhist literati, Zhou Yong (周顒 d.488) and Shen Yue played an important role in making vegetarian practice further widely known.¹⁸⁸ Zhou was a court official, first of the Liu Song dynasty, and later of the Qi dynasty. He lived the life of a hermit and associated widely with monks even while still in office. As a literary talent, he spent his last days as a teacher in the imperial academy. As a Buddhist, he was a serious vegetarian, and according to his biography in the *Nanqi shu*, he seemed to enjoy vegetarian food very much. In fact, an anecdote shows his view on being a Buddhist as vegetarianism being just as important as celibacy.¹⁸⁹ In correspondence he urged his friend, He Yin (何胤 446-531), also a Buddhist, to give up eating meat. The latter took his advice but asked one of his students to write a work justifying why eating fish should be allowed, which made Xiao Ziliang furious.¹⁹⁰ Zhou also wrote to convince He Yin's brother, He Dian (何點 437-504), that he should not eat meat. Zhou believed that kindness was essential to being a Buddhist as well as to being a gentleman. Apart from telling him that eating meat caused animals suffering and karmic retribution, Zhou also likened the moral supremacy of a gentleman to the *zouyu* (騶虞, an auspicious creature mentioned in the Classics) which only eats herbs that have died naturally.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ LS 40: 569, 50: 717, 726; NS 25: 680.

¹⁸⁶ SS 58: 1592.

¹⁸⁷ WS 19B: 510, 83b: 1834, 90: 1931.

¹⁸⁸ The vegetarian ideas of both persons have been studied. See Gijun Suwa, 'Chūgoku bukkyo ni okeru saishoku shugushisō no keisei ni kausuru kanken: shūyō chinyaku' (*Aichi daigaku bunkubu kiyō*, 12, 1982), pp. 104-120. This article is collected in the *Chūgoku kankei ronsetsu shiryō*, no.25, 1983, vol. 1, pp. 22-30.

¹⁸⁹ NS 27: 739, 48: 1194-98; NQS 52: 897-900. Also see Wu Jun's (吳均) *Qi chunqiu* (齊春秋) in the *Shuofu*, vol. 5, p. 2748b.

¹⁹⁰ A later author quotes his saying that shellfish are not even as lively as grasses and trees therefore can be eaten. See Shi Zhuhong's (祿宏) *Zhuchuang suibi* (竹窗隨筆), J. 33, N.B277, p. 25b.

¹⁹¹ NQS 41: 730-34. According to the GHMJ (T. 52, p. 293b), Zhou's letter was addressed to He Yin.

The poet Shen Yue was another high-ranking, literary-minded official who enthusiastically advocated vegetarianism. He first expressed his vegetarian theory in his *Junsheng lun* (均聖論, 'treaties on equating sages'), where he equated the Chinese sages with the Indian Buddha, for he believed that they both preached to the masses with the same teaching, which is kindness. He also held that non-killing developed in both Chinese culture and Indian Buddhism, and stressed the importance of vegetarianism by resorting to Mencius's concept of *ren*.¹⁹² His idea attracted the attention of the leading Daoist master Tao Hongjing who disagreed with him.¹⁹³ Shen further emphasized his idea by writing another essay under the title of *Jiujing cibei lun* (究竟慈悲論, 'treaties on ultimate mercy and compassion'), in which he convincingly conveyed why vegetarianism was necessary for Buddhists.¹⁹⁴ According to his view, the teachings of compassion and loving-kindness were integral and thorough in both Buddhism and the tradition of Chinese sages, but were only gradually made known to the masses in both traditions. He insisted that in the Buddhist case the *Niepan jing* was the most important source in explicitly advocating vegetarianism, and also mentioned proudly that before the translation of this text, monks from a mountain in the south of China had already practised vegetarianism for a long time.¹⁹⁵ This information shows that the *Niepan jing* was the most influential force that caused people to be aware of Buddhist vegetarianism. In addition, it also shows that other earlier texts advocating vegetarianism were neglected by the Buddhists of that time presumably because they were not so systematic and emphatic on the practice.

In return, the appearance of many vegetarians in upper-class society made vegetarianism more known to members of society, both religious and secular. Some members of the intelligentsia started to compile didactic stories aiming to spread the belief that meat eating incurred horrible retribution. An earlier fifth century short-story collection titled *Yiyuan* (異苑 'a garden of marvels') contains a few such stories. (For examples, see

¹⁹² For a discussion of his essay, see Janousch, 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual', pp. 136-38.

¹⁹³ GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 121b-22a.

¹⁹⁴ Richard B. Mather, *The Poet Shen Yueh (441-513)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 163-65.

¹⁹⁵ *Jiujing cibei lun*, GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 292c-93a. Also see his *Neidian xu*, written at the order of the emperor in about 490, T. 52, p. 231c.

Chapter three.) It is believed that these stories also helped Buddhist vegetarianism to spread among the general public.

4. The Imperial Legitimation of Vegetarianism for the Saṃgha

With royal patronage, Buddhism in many respects flourished to an unprecedented extent during the Liang dynasty. Buddhist vegetarian practice in particular became more fashionable than ever before, and vegetarians of both the monastics and laity outnumbered those of previous dynasties. The custom eventually culminated in a permanent practice for monastics, a significant historical reform in Chinese Buddhist history. The key figure in this reform was Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty.¹⁹⁶ The emperor himself was originally a Daoist follower, but after ascending the throne he publicly renounced Daoist practice and took refuge in Buddhism,¹⁹⁷ eventually taking the Bodhisattva ordination.¹⁹⁸ He was certainly a vegetarian, especially in his later years when he became an extremely pious Buddhist. Institutionalising vegetarianism as a monastic rule was just one of his actions that qualified him as a Buddhist emperor.¹⁹⁹ Some scholars have suggested that his open renunciation of Daoism and propagation of vegetarianism were his strategic means of getting hold of and strengthening emperorsip. It would be out of place here to investigate why he renounced Daoism, but it is necessary to examine his motive for his campaign of vegetarianism.

¹⁹⁶ The Emperor had the longest regime among all the rulers of the Southern Dynasty. His political career has been investigated by Zhou Yiliang, who holds that believing in Buddhism was the greatest mistake of the Emperor. See his, 'Lun Liang Wudi jiqi shidai' (*Zhonghua xueshu lunwen ji*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), pp. 123-54, esp. p. 140.

¹⁹⁷ See his edict of 'renouncing faith in Daoism (捨事李老道法詔)', GHMJ, T. 52, p. 111c-112c. The authenticity of this edict has been disputed, though without convincing result, by Xiong Qingyuan, 'Liang Wudi Tianjian sannian "sheshi lilao daofa" shi zhengwei' (*Huanggang shizhuan xuebao* 18: 2, 1998). For some confirmation of the Emperor's action, see Michel Strickmann, 'A Taoist Confirmation of Liang Wu ti's Suppression of Taoism' (*Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98: 4, 1978), pp. 467-474.

¹⁹⁸ For a study on the emperor Wu's Bodhisattva ordination, see Janousch, 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual', pp. 173-182. His action was followed by his son Xiao Lun (蕭綸, 519-551), GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 111c-12c.

¹⁹⁹ For his devotion to Buddhist faith, see a short description in the LS 3: 80.

4.1. Some Possible Reasons behind the Emperor's Decision

Emperor Wu's institutionalisation of vegetarianism for the Saṃgha and his taking Bodhisattva ordination have been viewed as political strategies to strengthen his rule over the Buddhist community which had shown signs of shrinking away from his authority.²⁰⁰ This view is based on two incidents in which two well-respected and eminent monks took no notice of his authority when he tried to make himself head of the Saṃgha.²⁰¹ The reaction of the monks could have made the emperor feel that his authority was being challenged. However, taking the Bodhisattva ordination could hardly have been an answer to that challenge or a means for him to increase his authority over the Saṃgha because. For the ordination in theory is never meant to have that function, and as mentioned earlier, the ordination did not in practice serve that purpose when taken by a couple of previous emperors. And in any case the Buddhist order was well under the control of the government. Indeed, it is arguable that by forcing the Saṃgha to accept his new regulation he could assert his authority and regain the recognition of the Saṃgha. Compared with other reasons discussed presently, this seems unlikely to be significant. To suggest that this was his motivation in making vegetarianism a rule for the Saṃgha is no less arbitrary than to say that Buddhism was responsible for the collapse of his empire.²⁰² Scholars also suggest that introducing vegetarianism as a monastic rule to the monastics is a way to purify the Saṃgha, but it is never established why the impurity of the Saṃgha was caused by the monastics' behaviour of eating meat.²⁰³

Based on the evidence provided in section 3 along with some further material, the emperor's actions can be explained by the four factors summarised below. The first and foremost factor was the increasing

²⁰⁰ Yan Shangwen, *Liang Wudi*, pp. 190-207.

²⁰¹ For details, see XGSZ, T. 50, p. 466a-c. Cf. Yan Shangwen, *Liang Wudi*, pp. 126-131.

²⁰² The opinion that Buddhism cost emperor Wu's kingdom is widely held among Chinese Marxist historians. For a modest version of this view, see Luo Sizhong, 'Liang Wudi zui yanzhong de shice bushi naxiang Hou Jing' (*Lishi jiaoxue wenti*, 2, 1996), pp. 11-14. On the other hand, Buddhists normally consider that the emperor's faith in Buddhism made his ruling extraordinarily longer and more peaceful than any other reign of the Six Dynasties (XGSZ, T. 50, p. 426c), which, according to Qian Zhongshu, was a shameless remark. See his *Guanzhui bian* (管锥编, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), vol. 4, p. 1371.

²⁰³ See Yan Shengwen, *Liang Wudi*, pp. 247-254.

popularity of Buddhist vegetarian practice. With this, plus the fact that more and more translations were available in China, which taught vegetarianism, both Buddhists and the public were made aware that Buddhists should be vegetarians. Though what is proscribed in those translations is totally absent in the proper monastic disciplinary rules concerning eating meat, the rules are included in a special collection of the canon—the Vinayapīṭaka (‘the division of monastic rules’)—access to which has always been forbidden to laypeople since, in theory, they were not supposed to read them.²⁰⁴ With free circulation of the sūtras and discouragement of access to the Vinaya texts, few members of the public would have known that the two divisions of the Buddhist canon contained contradictions on the matter of eating meat. Thus the easiest thing for them to notice was that the Buddha advised Buddhists not to eat meat. This soon became semi-common knowledge when the pro-vegetarianism *Niepan jing* became popular and the debates and discussions concerning this text and the issue of eating meat became the focus of public attention. As shown above this situation was created not only by pious Buddhist literati and officials, but also by emperors. One anecdote tells of Emperor Wen of the Liu Song who told foreign master Guṇavarman that he had been longing to stop killing and eating meat, but he could not because of his daily commitments as an emperor. He requested a solution for his dilemma. In reply, the master said that as emperor, a righteous rule could help him accrue great merit, which could outweigh the merit he could accumulate from not eating meat. Even more important, such merit gained through the use of his power and authority would encourage the masses to follow the Buddha’s teaching. Whatever this anecdote may indicate to the reader in the realistic sense, one thing is obvious, that the Chinese of the century were certainly well aware of the Buddhist issues surrounding eating meat.²⁰⁵ Another anecdote, apparently dated to the very beginning of the Liang dynasty and about another foreign translator, provides an equally similar social effect.²⁰⁶

The second factor that could have contributed to the emperor’s decision was the economic concern of some politicians who appealed to the government to take tough action on the Buddhist community. As early as the Eastern Jin, scholarly officials from the Confucian tradition had noticed the steadily growing Buddhist community’s negative impact on the value of Confucian tradition and on the state economy. Such a concern

²⁰⁴ FGL, T. 25, p.34c.

²⁰⁵ GSZ, T. 50, p. 341a.

²⁰⁶ LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 98c.

was first indicated in Shi Daoheng's (釋道恒 346-417) *Shibo lun* (釋駁論, 'treatise of explanation and refutation'), in which the author created two characters to discuss the issues seemingly faced by the Buddhist community at the time. An imagined gentleman representing the Confucian tradition questions another ill-educated man who is supposed to represent Buddhism. The gentleman first accuses the monastics of being one of the five calamities to society and state, and then makes a few suggestions with regard to how a Buddhist monk should live his life. One of his suggestions is that a monk should eat only vegetarian food. To this suggestion his interlocutor gives a defensive reply.²⁰⁷ It seems strange that Daoheng had the Buddhist representative defend the monastics' eating meat since according to two texts Daoheng himself was a strict vegetarian,²⁰⁸ but the main point of their argument was that some monastics had become aware that not every one in society approved of their lifestyle, and that some lay persons preferred monastics to be vegetarian, as indicated in the translation *Foshuo weiceng you jing* previously discussed. With the ongoing debates between Buddhists and Confucians and Buddhists and Daoists occurring frequently in both Southern and Northern China, the question of whether a Buddhist should be a vegetarian eventually evolved into an issue and a subject of debate.²⁰⁹ The voice from society urging reform of the Saṃgha, including making monastics vegetarian, became louder and louder. Quite a few officials made their attitudes and opinions towards Buddhism heard in the court and some of them were rather hostile. In the Liu Song dynasty, for instance, a court official named Zhou Lang (周朗 425-460) made a lengthy memorial to the ruler, setting out Buddhism's harmful impact on the country. He urged the ruler to reduce the number of monastics and make them live a simple life and eat only vegetarian food, although he himself was criticised by others for not having abstained from eating meat during the mourning

²⁰⁷ T. 52, p. 35b, 36a-b.

²⁰⁸ GSZ, T. 50, 365a; LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 82b.

²⁰⁹ For accounts of various Buddhist debates lasted for years, see Kenneth Ch'en, 'On Some Factors Responsible for the Anti-Buddhist Persecution under that P'ei-chao' (HJAS, 17:1-2, 1954), pp. 262-63. A complete treatment of those debates is Gong Shaoying's 'Cong Tangchao zhongye yiqian de fan fojiao douzheng tan dao fojiao zai Zhongguo di fazhan daolu' (*Zhongguo zhexue*, vol. 2-3, 1980), pp. 251-287. This article also occurs in English, see Gong Shaoying, 'A Discussion of the Anti-Buddhism Struggle in China before the Mid-Tang Dynasty and the Path of Buddhism's development in China' (*Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, summer 1993,) pp. 3-102.

period for his parents.²¹⁰ This concern was transformed into severe criticisms and vicious attacks on Buddhism during the Liang dynasty, when Emperor Wu became obsessed with Buddhism. At first, it was Xun Ji (荀濟, fl 5th-6th) who launched the attack. He told the emperor that the Buddhists had made ten systematic conspiracies against the government and that Buddhism in general was calamitous to the state economy.²¹¹ Xu's view was repeated in 522 (i.e. the third year of the Putong 普通 period 520-27) by an official named Guo Zushen (郭祖深), who further stressed that Buddhism was disastrous to the country because it undermined the traditional political system and family values. He suggested that all monastics that were not really practising Buddhism and who were under the age of forty must be laicised and that all remaining monastics should neither eat meat nor wear silk clothes. The author of the dynastic history records that the emperor did not adopt his suggestions, but in consideration of his integrity and loyalty promoted him to a higher position.²¹²

Criticisms like these two coupled with the vegetarian fashion among the laity that continued on for a considerable period eventually became a strong force making monastics feel ashamed to eat meat in public.²¹³ It is difficult to determine whether monastics' being vegetarian can have a positive impact on the state economy, but as will be shown in his edicts, the emperor's reasons for legitimising vegetarianism do echo economic considerations.

The third factor for Emperor Wu's decision and action was partly inspired by the deeds of his model, the great Buddhist Emperor Aśoka. The latter, as we are informed by his historically valuable rock and pillar inscriptions as well as by Pāli sources, had made an effort to purify the Saṃgha, which was copied by a few Ceylonese Kings.²¹⁴ Emperor Wu is said to have voluntarily served as a scribe in the translation process of the

²¹⁰ SS 82: 2100.

²¹¹ See Xun's biography in the BS 83: 2786, also GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 124b, 128c-131c, 134c.

²¹² NS 70: 1720, 1722-23.

²¹³ This situation was revealed by an edict of emperor Wu, T. 52, p. 294c.

²¹⁴ Richard F. Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism*, pp. 131, 161. There have been archaeological finds supporting this theory. See Gu Zhengmei, 'Xilan fojiao jishi fojiao wenxian ji zhongwen fojiao wenxian suo chengxian de xilan zaoqi fojiao fazhan mianmao' (*Foxue yanjiu zhongxin xuebao* 8, 2003), pp. 239, 241-44.

Ayuwang jing (阿育王經 ‘sūtra of King Aśoka’, trsl. in 512).²¹⁵ There existed three other independent texts about Aśoka before this time, and one of them was a long legend, the *Ayuwang zhuan* (阿育王傳 ‘legend of King Aśoka’).²¹⁶ In the legend, Aśoka is said to have been entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the Saṃgha.²¹⁷ As we will see in his edicts, this was also used by the emperor to justify prohibiting monastics from eating meat. In reality, his effort can be considered as an attempt to solve the dilemma that although there was no Vinaya rule against eating meat a large number of the sūtras did advocate vegetarianism, in order to ease the tension between the Saṃgha and the anti-Buddhists.

The last factor concerning our discussion here is a brief account of how the Emperor Wu became a vegetarian, which might help us to understand whether the emperor’s own attitude towards vegetarianism was conducive to his decision to codify vegetarianism as a rule for monastics. As briefly outlined earlier, maintaining a vegetarian diet during mourning was one of the most important symbolic actions a filial son or daughter was expected to take. The emperor was filially pious and showed it in his enthusiastic activities regarding the *Xiaojing* (孝經, classic of filial piety). He often lectured on this text, made commentaries to it, and established official posts and appointed scholars to study the text, together with his commentary and other Confucian texts. It was under his encouragement that during his regime there were quite a number of scholars, including Buddhist monks and Daoist priests (like Tao Hongjing), engaged in interpreting this text.²¹⁸ Andreas Ernst Janousch has rightly pointed out that the emperor’s filial piety was also closely associated with his vegetarian diet.²¹⁹ In prefaces to his *Xiaosi fu* (孝思賦, ‘rhapsody of filial thoughts’) and the *Jingye fu* (淨業賦, ‘rhapsody of cleansing karma’), the emperor said that killing and eating meat were not agreeable from the the viewpoint of Buddhist compassion, and also displayed deep regret for indulging in eating meat and for not having been able to attend to his parents while they were alive. He even states that he cried every time he

²¹⁵ LDSBJ, T. 49, p.98b).

²¹⁶ *Ayuwang zhuan* (T. 50, No. 2042), *Tianzun shuo Ayuwang piyu jing* (天尊說阿育王譬喻經, T. 50, No. 2044), and *Ayuwang xi huaimu yinyuan jing* (T. 50, No. 2045).

²¹⁷ T. 50, p. 103a.

²¹⁸ For the emperor’s studies in Confucianism, see Chen Zhaohui, ‘Liang Wudi yu nanchao de ruxue’ (*Kongzi yanjiu*, 1, 1994), pp. 50-55.

²¹⁹ Janousch, ‘The Reform of Imperial Ritual’, p. 149-156.

read stories about filial sons,²²⁰ which were confirmed in a work written by his seventh son, Emperor Yuan (i.e. Xiao Yi 蕭繹 508-554) of the Liang.²²¹ His emotion is indicated in the following passages of the *Jingye fu*.²²²

When I was a commoner, [I] only knew propriety and righteousness, and did not have faith [in Buddhism]. [I] killed and cooked living beings to entertain guests, and followed the custom in eating meat, seldom tasting vegetables. Till facing the south (i.e. ascended to the throne), [I] was so rich as to rule all the country. Delicacies from far away, tributes following one another and different food within the [four] seas all came with no exception. Thus in front of me food was laid in ten square feet, differently tasted food scattered all over the chopping board. Then as [I] started to eat, [I] put down my chopsticks and, weeping at the table, [I] was very anxious to attend on [my parents] day and night, offering them coolness in the summer and warmth in the winter. How could [I] have the heart to enjoy these foods alone? Because of that [I] became a vegetarian and do not eat fish and flesh.

朕布衣之時，唯知禮義，不知信向，烹宰眾生以接賓客，隨物肉食，不識菜味。及至南面，富有天下：遠方珍羞，貢獻相繼，海內異食，莫不必至，方丈滿前，百味盈俎。乃方食輟筯對案流泣，恨不得以及溫清，朝夕供養，何心獨甘此膳？因爾蔬食，不噉魚肉。

The emperor's personal reasons for being a vegetarian tempt one to suggest that this is another factor that had affected him in a positive way in making vegetarianism a rule for monastics, who had escaped from the duty of attending to their parents and therefore should also stop eating meat.

4.2. The Imperially-Organised Conference on Eating Meat

All of the above factors resulted in an important event for Chinese Buddhism: an imperial meeting designed by Emperor Wu for legislating against eating meat in the Saṃgha eventually escalated into a conference in which the emperor took it upon himself to convince all the participants that Buddhists should not eat meat.

²²⁰ GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 335c-338a.

²²¹ JLZJZ (xingwang) 1: 47.

²²² T. 52, p. 336a. Parts of the text are translated in Janousch's 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual', pp. 143-44.

Scholars suggest that the event took place in a year between 518-523 and 525.²²³ It could not have been earlier than 514 in which the emperor's favourite master Shi Baozhi (釋保誌 d.514) died. Baozhi was said to have possessed some unusual powers and to have been well respected by many, including the emperor himself. However, he was not a vegetarian because Lu Chui's (陸捶 470-526) *Zhi fashi muzhiming* (誌法師墓誌銘 'epitaph on Dharma master Zhi's memorial tablet') says the master sometimes begged for alcohol and *yao* (餚 food consisting meat or /and fish); and sometimes he did not eat at all for days.²²⁴ The *Gaoseng zhuan* also mentions him begging for fish to eat.²²⁵ It is clear that by then the emperor had not issued the edict introducing vegetarianism. Otherwise, it would have been very strange for the emperor to use those strong words towards the meat-eating monks, his master included, in one of his edicts. One of his edicts mentioned that the emperor banned animal sacrifice, and, as has been shown above, the ban on animal sacrifice could be no earlier than 517. Two pieces of evidence from other sources push the date for the conference one year later, both of which are connected to another eminent monk, Sengyou, who died in 518. Sengyou, a well-known Vinayan expert also favoured by the emperor, was not mentioned on the list of participants. Besides, the fact that such an important Buddhist event as this conference was not mentioned anywhere in Sengyou's *Hongming ji* is evidence that the event took place after the work was finished by 518. Moreover, the emperor took Bodhisattva ordination in 519,²²⁶ and it can be surmised that introducing vegetarianism to the Saṃgha was a result of his new religious zeal after the ordination. The fact that Guo Zushen's memorial was made in 522, specifically suggesting that the emperor should ban monastics from eating meat, indicates that the conference

²²³ Gijun Suwa, *Chūgoku Chūko Bukkyōshi Kenkyū*, p. 27; Yan Shangwen, 'Liang Wudi de junquan', p. 5; Janousch, 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual', p. 150; Yan Shangwen, *Liang Wudi*, pp. 228-239.

²²⁴ QSGSDQHLCW vol. 4, pp. 3258-9. The epitaph was written at the order of the emperor Wu. See GSZ, T. 50, p. 394c; FYZL, T. 53, p. 520a.

²²⁵ T. 50, p. 394b. The motif that monks who had supernatural powers gained through meditation were not bound with the vegetarian rule also appeared in later Buddhist and secular texts. For instance, the monk Senglang (僧朗, d. ca. 619) of the Sui dynasty (T. 50, p. 650c) and Daoji (道濟 1130-1209) of the Song dynasty. The latter's life has been studied by Xu Shanshu, see his article 'Jigong shengping kaolüe' (*Dongnan wenhua*, 3, 1997), pp. 80-86. And Meir Shahar, *Crazy Ji: Chinese Religion and Popular Literature*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, distributed by Harvard University Press, 1998.

²²⁶ XGSZ, T. 50, p. 469b.

might have taken place only after 522. Finally, since his Supernumerary Gentleman Cavalier Attendant / Left Guard of Heir Apparent named Zhou She (周捨 469-524), who died in 524, also played a part in the event, the conference could not have been held later than that year. Thus, we may suggest that it took place sometime between 522 and 524.

The conference began on the 23rd day of an unknown month sometime during that period. Before that day, the emperor summoned one thousand four hundred and forty-eight monastics among whom the majority consisted of officers of monasteries and scholar monks, while the rest were well-respected monks and preceptors from major monasteries in the capital. They gathered in the palace called Hualin dian (華林殿 ‘palace of multitudinous flowers’). There, in the early morning, they listened to two monks reciting the first section of the fourth chapter of the *Da banniepan jing*, the *sixiang pin* (四相品 ‘section of the four signs’), which takes vegetarianism as its main topic. Then the emperor had someone read out loud his edict of ‘banning (the consumption of) alcohol and meat’ (斷酒肉文).²²⁷ The gathering ended with a prayer of confession for having eaten meat up to that point, followed by lunch.²²⁸

4.3. The Emperor’s Edict Banning Eating Meat and Drinking Alcohol

Before we go on to the next item of the conference agenda, we need to briefly examine the emperor’s edict, which is believed to have been based on the *sixiang pin* of the *Niepan jing*.²²⁹ A glimpse at its content however, shows that his reasons for prohibiting meat and alcohol were influenced by the *Lengqie jing* and other texts rather than by the *Niepan jing* alone.

²²⁷ GHMJ includes an article entitled ‘Duan jiurou wen’ (斷酒肉文) which should be the right title, for from the contents of the article, the emperor also banned drinking alcohol.

²²⁸ Since it asked the ‘wrong doers’ to confess to the Maitriya Buddha, this prayer may have something to do with the *Yiqie zhi Guangming xianren bu shirou jing* (T. 3, No.183). This prayer, according to a study, is the *Cibei lianghuang baochan* (慈悲梁皇寶懺) of which the confession is also made to Maitriya Buddha; see Xu Liqiang, ‘Lianghuang chan chutan’ (*Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies* 2, 1998), pp.177-206.

²²⁹ Zhenjing Shi, ‘The Formation and Transformation’, p. 242.

The edict is a lengthy text, aimed explicitly at monastics.²³⁰ Although not all of the emperor's arguments were logical and strong enough to serve the points they were meant to support, it can still be broken up into three main parts. In the first part he asserts that eating meat makes monastics worse than followers of other religious faiths (he labels them as heretics) and Buddhist devotees. The second part focuses on arguing eating meat is inherently bad by citing some later Mahāyāna sūtras. The third part contains his threat to take tough actions against meat-eating monastics and refutations against the views in favour of eating meat. To argue why meat-eating monastics are worse than any heretical believers, the emperor first provides a general reason and then ten specific ones. The general reason contrasted monastics with heretical followers on the single ground that the former eat meat and drink alcohol because they, like heretical followers, do not believe the principle of cause and effect, namely, the retribution of the ten good or bad deeds, but, unlike heretical followers, they do not follow their teachers' instructions. In other word, in his mind, the first reason why monastics should not eat meat and drink alcohol is because of the principle of cause and effect which was used in Zhou Yong's argument. It is not clear to whom the emperor refers to when he says, 'heretical followers'.²³¹ Reading between the lines, though, it seems that all those who do not believe in the theory of cause and effect are heretical followers. The ten specific reasons why meat-eating monastics are worse than heretical followers are as follows:

- 1) Heretical followers follow the instruction of their teachers, but meat-eating monastics violate their teachers' instruction as well as what was laid down in the Vinaya texts. In particular he singles out the *Niepan jing*, and the Vinaya rule that prohibits the drinking of alcohol.
- 2) Heretical believers do not break their disciplinary rules but meat-eating monastics do. Here we are certain that breaking rules through eating meat, refers to the *Fanwang jing* which was the only Vinaya text at this time to ban eating meat, unless the emperor considered the *Niepan jing* to be a Vinaya text as in the previous reason.
- 3) Heretical followers practise self-mortification as well as vegetarianism, but some of the monastics do not. The emperor may have formed this reason by borrowing information from some early

²³⁰ Part of the edict has been translated in Janousch, 'The Reform of Imperial Ritual', p. 150.

²³¹ T. 52, p. 294b-c

sūtras (as mentioned in section 1) and a Mahāyāna sūtra in which some non-Buddhist religious persons are said not to eat meat.²³²

- 4) Heretical followers are frank and honest because they have nothing to hide, but the meat-eating monastics are not honest because when they eat meat they only communicate with other monastics who do the same thing and all of them dare not reveal what they do. From this argument, it is clearly indicated that eating meat during this time period was considered shameful behaviour. This leads to the implication that vegetarianism was not only practised voluntarily by Buddhists, but also had become institutionally and socially commendable behaviour for them.
- 5) The monks are afraid of eating meat in public so they cannot relax while eating it.
- 6) Although heretical teachings are harmful, their followers only harm themselves by believing in them, they do not harm others. Meat-eating monastics are harming both themselves and others, since when the laity question them as to why they eat meat, they use the 'three-clean meat' as an excuse, and in doing so, they are misleading and harming the laity as well as themselves.
- 7) The beliefs of heretics are not the truth, but they do believe strictly in their religious texts. The meat-eating monastics are worse than them, because they do not even follow their texts like the *Niepan jing* and the *Lengqie jing*.
- 8) Heretics get severe punishment if they break the rules, but not in the Buddhist case, since monk officers and heads of monasteries do exactly what is not lawful (Again, it would be interesting to know how sure the emperor was about the punishment of the heretics).
- 9) Heretics teach their lay followers what they practise, but the meat eating monastics cannot do so, because they do not practise what they preach to the laity. If we take this argument at face value, this slightly contradicts what the emperor says in 6) that monks tell the laity that it is all right to eat meat because the Buddha said so in certain texts. However, these two points refer to two types of meat eating monks: one who eats but tells the laity not to, the other who eats and justifies their behaviour by resorting to the so-called legitimate meat argument.
- 10) Heretics take things the wrong way, but they do not exhibit the type of behaviour that the meat-eating monastics do.²³³

²³² *Lengqie jing*, T. 16, p. 513c.

²³³ GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 294b-95a.

The emperor's next major point is to prove that the meat-eating monastics are worse than the laity of their own religion. He gives nine reasons to prove this. One, the meat-eating monastics teach the laity not to drink alcohol and not to eat meat but do so themselves. Two and three, the laity eat meat only in their homes and not in front of the icons of Buddhism but meat-eating monastics eat meat and vomit in front of the statues. Four, people would not disdain the laity who eat meat and drink wine, but they would look down upon Buddhism if they see monastics eating meat and drinking alcohol. Five, when the laity consume meat and drink in their homes they are only at the most offending their own deities, but the meat-eating monastics scare off all kinds of deities and make devils happy. Six, by eating meat and drinking alcohol the laity waste their own fortunes, but the meat eating monastics damage the good dharma as well as the *futian* (福田 'field of merits') for the laity. Seven, the laity eats meat and drinks alcohol purchased with their own hard earned efforts, but the meat-eating monastics waste others' money. Eight, eating meat and drinking alcohol are normal for the laity because they are supposed to do so, whereas monastics are not supposed to do so by the standard of common knowledge. If they do, their behaviour is just an open invitation for devils. Nine, eating meat and drinking alcohol among the laity cannot harm their own business, but the meat-eating monastics will destroy the seed of Buddhahood.²³⁴

The emperor's seventh point shows that he had been affected by the economical concerns of Zhou Lang's and Guo Zushen's suggestions; perhaps he meant that since monastics do not earn their own living they should eat simply. This type of economic concern over eating meat can also be found in early Buddhist sources. As E. Washburn Hopkins has observed, even Vinaya texts occasionally prohibit eating meat and fish because they are delicious and a monk who is seeking enlightenment is not supposed to indulge in any delicacies,²³⁵ although this did not become a monastic rule until in later Mahāyāna Buddhism. His eighth point seems to confirm for the second time that by this time it had become 'common knowledge' that monastics should not eat meat. What sounds shocking about this is that in a separate passage he calls eating meat the behaviour of animals, an opinion no doubt taken from the *Lengqie jing*. According to him, fox, dogs, and other animals like to eat meat, but humans are superior

²³⁴ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 295b-c.

²³⁵ E. Washburn Hopkins, 'The Buddhistic Rule Against Eating Meat', p. 457.

to animals, and therefore they should not eat meat.²³⁶ Point nine is somewhat arbitrary, since according to the advices the Buddha gave to a Brahmin youth drinking is the first of the six actions that cause the loss of a householder's possessions, eating meat was not even mentioned in that context.²³⁷

The next task of his edict is to formulate reasons why monastics should not eat meat. His reasons are based on doctrinal sources. His first reason is that eating meat destroys the seed of the great benevolence. This point occurs in many texts, and he obviously made use of those sources.²³⁸ The second reason is that eating meat creates obstacles on the way to final emancipation, hinders the practice of all the techniques, and causes sufferings in a variety of painful environments including the purgatories.²³⁹ His third and last doctrinal reason is that eating meat elongates the time of the avenging cycle, since that which is eaten could be one's relatives who could in return develop long-lasting revenge. To prove this he uses two stories to illustrate that eating meat could result in being eaten and therefore generate a vicious circle of the eaten and the eater. Furthermore, in general, the eating of other beings' meat also stimulates their hatred which could develop into many kinds of obstacles to religious practice.²⁴⁰

Finally his edict reproaches those who think that eating meat is acceptable. He highlights four views that are commonly used to justify the eating of meat. First he points out that the belief that fish does not count as meat is wrong because the flesh of both watery and land living beings is all called meat.²⁴¹ The second view he criticises is that it is not easy to be a vegetarian and that vegetarian food is unhealthy while fish and meat have better nutritional value. To this view, his answer is that vegetarian food can strengthen one's faith in religion and keep one's head clear. Those Buddhists who cannot be on a vegetarian diet lack sufficient faith. Moreover, he argues that eating meat is liable to cause illness and cloud one's head. As for the third view, that vegetarian food is by nature cold

²³⁶ T. 52, p. 296a.

²³⁷ *Chang ahan jing*, T. 1, p. 70b; ZAHJ, T. 1, p. 639c; etc.

²³⁸ For canonical evidence on this point, see the *Niepan jing*, T. 12, p. 386a, 626a, 868a; *Lengqie jing*, T. 16, p. 561a-b, 563b, *Da fangdeng tuoluo ni jing*, T. 21, p. 646a, *Da fangguang huayan shi-e wang pin jing*, T. 85, p. 1360a.

²³⁹ T. 52, pp. 296b-7a.

²⁴⁰ Both stories can be found in the *Apitan piposha lun* (阿毘曇毘婆沙論), p. T. 28, p. 376a-b.

²⁴¹ T. 52, p. 296b.

therefore one needs hot-natured fish and meat to create balance, the emperor argues that while vegetarian food is cold and meat is hot, cold and hot are incompatible, just like fire and water. His last object of criticism are those vegetarians who are very proud and defensive, or those vegetarians who appear outwardly calm but are actually full of jealousy of others who are seemingly better than themselves. For these people, he says that practising vegetarianism will create no merit at all.²⁴²

Apart from the three arguments discussed above, the emperor's edict also proscribes the use of animals and insects in medicines, an ancient practice.²⁴³ He tells the Samgha that he has ordered that no animals should be killed in any sacrifices to the various deities. He particularly prohibits the offering of deer and goat meat in the sacrifice to the four great divine kings, and warns that if someone is found so doing, the clerical officers in the temple will be punished.²⁴⁴

Finally, he asks the senior monks and clerical officers to enforce vegetarian principles, and he urges young monastics to follow the teachings of the texts and their teachers' advice to be vegetarians. He declares twice that if any monk is found eating meat he will be punished according to the law, or be made to return to secular society.²⁴⁵ In the meantime he also wants to set an example himself by swearing that if he in the future is found eating meat and drinking alcohol, including milk with honey and dairy cream, he is willing to be punished by ghosts or to suffer in hells.²⁴⁶

²⁴² T. 52, p. 298b-c.

²⁴³ For the emperor's prohibition on drinking alcohol, see T. 52, 295b, his ban on consuming pungent vegetables, see T. 52, p. 93c, ban on using leather and other clothing derived from animals, see T. 52, p. 297b-c. For the extension of vegetarian rules to silk, see Shen Yue's *Jiujing cibei lun*, in T. 52, p. 293a, an English translation of it can be seen in Mather's *The Poet Shen Yüeh*, pp. 163-5. Vegetarianism may originally not include abstaining from eating pungent vegetables, but in the translations made from the Liu Song dynasty onwards, this became a very important element. In the *Qimin yaoshu* (齊民要術 'the essential techniques for governing peasants') there is a small section on how to prepare vegetarian food. The first dish is onion and garlic. And then every other dish has onion as an ingredient. See Jia Sixie (賈思勰, fl. 5-6th cent.), *Qimin yaoshu* (Taiwan: Shijie shuju, 1958), pp. 157-58.

²⁴⁴ T. 52, p. 298a.

²⁴⁵ T. 52, pp. 295c, 297c-98a.

²⁴⁶ T. 52, p. 297c.

His vows seem to have been preserved in a Dunhuang manuscript. A passage bearing his name as the author and entitled *Dongdu fayuan wen* (東都發願文, ‘the text of vows made in the eastern capital’) reads as follows: [I] take the aspiration that from now on till the time [I] reach the place of the Way²⁴⁷ (i.e. full enlightenment) life after life, [I] will not eat living beings any more, and I will not drink milk nor honey, not even in dreams, let alone now. [I will stay] thoroughly pure whether on the throne or being overturned, (願從今以去, 至乎道場, 生生世世不復噉食眾生, 乃至夢中不飲乳蜜, 無論現前。若覆若興, 畢竟清淨。²⁴⁸

Although the few items collected in the *Guang hongming ji* indicate that the writing and holding of religious liturgies of confession seem to have been fashionable Buddhist practices among the ruling class during the fifth and sixth centuries, the emperor’s vows and confession may have been inspired by Shen Yue’s *Chanhui wen* (懺悔文 ‘essay of confession’) in which the author expressed his repentance for having been uncompassionate and eaten meat.²⁴⁹

4.4. Debates and Further Edicts

Since some participants in the conference complained that there was neither a Vinaya rule against eating meat nor a tradition of confessing for having eaten meat,²⁵⁰ on the 29th day the emperor gathered one hundred and eighty-nine scholarly monastics led by three Vinaya masters in the same palace to discuss this issue, and to put his questions to the Vinaya

²⁴⁷ 道場 here means differently from its today’s meaning, ‘the place for Buddhists to practice’. This usage seemed to have started from Zhu Fahu’s time and continued to be used throughout the Six Dynasties.

²⁴⁸ D. No.2189, see *Dunhuang baozang* (Huang Yongwu ed., 敦煌寶藏, Taibei: Xin wenfeng gongsi, 1985), vol. 116, p. 417.

²⁴⁹ GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 330c-331c. Emperor Wu also wrote some other confession prayers, see T. 52, 332b-c.

²⁵⁰ The earliest Vinaya text made into Chinese is the *Binaiyē* (鼻奈耶, trsl. in 386 by Zhu Fonian with the assistance of Tanjing). According to Daoxuan’s *Liangchu qingzhong yi* (量處輕重儀, T. 45, p. 840a), before the SFL (四分律, trsl. by Buddhayaśas in 410) became popular across country, in the North monks used Mahāsaṅghika’s Vinaya, the MHSL (僧祇律), in the south the SSL (十誦律, trsl. by Kumārajīva et al., completed in about 406). The fact that monks in the North used *Sengqi lü* was confirmed by Wei Shou’s (魏收 506-572) *Weishu* (114: 3031).

masters.²⁵¹ The emperor first asked Fachao (法超 456-526) to answer those monastics who protested that there were no rules against eating meat and no confessions for having eaten meat. Fachao told the emperor that the Buddha actually wanted to prohibit eating meat once and for all by moving from no rule to the rule of 'three-clean meat'. The second master named Sengbian (僧辯 fl. c.494-523) answered similarly, except that he said that totally cutting off meat could come later, according to the spiritual capacities of the individual. The third master called Baodu (寶度), agreed with Sengbian. Then, when the emperor asked them if they ate meat, only Fachao's answer was absolutely negative, while the other two admitted that they did eat meat when they were ill, but they would not eat it publicly. At this point, the emperor asked a few related questions such as the exact meaning of 'the meat clean in three respects', and why Vinaya texts and the sūtras differ on the meat-eating issue etc. After some bizarre and superficially complicated arguments, the emperor then declared that it was not correct to explain that there were no rules in the Vinaya texts prohibiting eating meat because no meat was absolutely clean so far as the three suggested respects were concerned. Then the emperor asked if those who ate meat exhibited kindness and compassion. As can be imagined, the answer he received was negative. Thus he made the masters accept that eating meat was to take life and this was contradictory to compassion and kindness and that eating meat could stop one from escaping the cycle of rebirth. He then asked, 'Was the Vinaya made for the purpose of guiding the disciples to the Release'? On receiving the answer 'yes', he immediately asked, 'then why does it allow the disciples to eat meat when this stops them from attaining freedom from the cycle of rebirth'? The masters replied that Vinaya texts were only intended for those of a low level of spiritual capacity, that the sūtras prohibiting meat eating came later and were for the spiritually more mature disciples. After some discussion on how to explain the situation that both Vinaya texts and other sūtra including the *Da banniepan jing* were preached by the Buddha, but only the latter condemned the eating of meat, he finally asked the other monks' opinions. To his surprise, what he got was a factual answer: that the Vinaya texts never prohibited meat eating.

Next, came the issue of confession for having eaten meat. The emperor, after convincing the masters that eating meat was not acceptable

²⁵¹ It is interesting to know that the emperor intentionally asked the Vinaya masters to interpret the Vinaya texts which had nothing on prohibiting eating meat while he himself is said to have known Vinaya very well (T. 50, pp. 469b, 607a).

according to the Buddha's teaching, as recorded in the *Da banniepan jing*, he further made them accept that they should confess for having eaten meat prior to their discussion, and that after confessing, they should never eat meat again. The conference ended with the reading of passages from a few Mahāyāna texts which prohibited the eating of meat.²⁵²

According to the same source, in the evening the emperor seemed to have rethought the issues raised at the conference and made his careful counter-arguments. He asked Zhou She to issue his explanations as edicts afterward. In these edicts, he says: (1) that those who eat meat have the mind of an ogre (*rākṣas*); (2) that no meat comes from animals dying from natural causes; (3) that killing animals is to take eight thousand lives since there are eight thousand worms in every animal's body; (4) that eating meat generates more demerit for monastics than for the laity. Extremely great sins would be incurred by scholarly monastics who ate meat; even lay followers who ate meat could not escape ending up in hell and much more serious demerit would be generated by monastics who do the same. And (5) that eating meat involves killing, which is against the principle of kindness and leads to hell.²⁵³

4.5. Vegetarian Practice after the New Injunction

The effect of the newly introduced injunction can be seen in several respects. The immediate effect is indicated in biographical sources describing the monastics. In the *Mingseng chuanchao* (名僧傳抄 'excerpts from the biographies of eminent monks', by Shi Baoliang 釋寶亮 fl. 5th), the *Gaoseng zhuan* (高僧傳, 'biographies of eminent monks' compiled by Shi Huijiao 釋慧皎, 497-554), the *Biqiuni zhuan* (比丘尼傳, 'biographies of Buddhist nuns' 釋寶唱, fl. ca. 467-533), and the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (續高僧傳 'further biographies of eminent monks'), all of which have been used before in this chapter, the authors describe those who were vegetarians with specific phrases such as '[they dieted on] vegetarian food and wore coarse clothes (蔬食布衣)'. The authors' special attention to the monastics' diet could be viewed as merely following the tradition of compilers in the standard histories who made special mention of the

²⁵² The emperor selected the following sūtras: the fourth chapter of the *FSDBNPJ*, the fourth chapter of the *Lengqie Abaduoluo baojing*, and the relevant passages in the first and second chapter of the *Yangjuemoluo jing*. For the exact locations of these passages of the sūtras, see p. 42, footnote 142.

²⁵³ T. 52, pp. 298c-303c.

quality of frugality of those literati and high-ranking officials. In other words, eating vegetarian food could be understood to be one of the laudable character traits of a monk. At the very least, this special attention indicated the authors' positive attitude and admiration towards the vegetarian lifestyle after the emperor's systematisation of vegetarianism. Whatever the reason may have been, the reality, as shown in these sources, is that the number of vegetarian monastics was visibly greater than in previous dynasties.²⁵⁴ One extreme example is the monk Huibu (慧布 fl. 549) who, after three days without food in wartime, refused to eat food which smelt like pork.²⁵⁵

The effect was not limited to the Buddhist community for in the Jing (荊) prefecture people were said to have stopped eating eggs after learning of the emperor's edicts against eating meat.²⁵⁶ More visible effects resulted from a similar edict issued by an emperor from the Northern Qi dynasty. According to the biography of the reputed Chan master Sengchou (僧稠 479-560), nearly three decades after Emperor Wu's campaign, Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi, organised a debate between Buddhists and Daoists, took the Bodhisattva ordination under the preceptorship of Sengchou and issued edicts banning alcohol and meat.²⁵⁷ Also around the same time in the North, the preparation of vegetarian food had already ended up as a whole section of an agricultural manual, the *Qimin yaoshu*.

The final evidence of the effect of the new injunction can be found in short-story collections, generally known as *zhiguai* (志怪, 'recording anomalies'). Most short-story collections of the Six Dynasties contain stories designed to edify people with Buddhist moral teachings, some of

²⁵⁴ XGSZ, T. 50, pp. 555b-56a. Gijun Suwa lists in two charts from the *Gaoseng chuan* and *Biqiuni zhuan* those monks and nuns who were vegetarians before the reform of emperor Wu. See his *Chūgoku Chūko Bukkyōshi Kenkyū*, pp. 46-9, 55-7. Another of his works lists the vegetarian monks after the conference. See his 'Ryōbutei' no danshu nikubun teishon no bunkashi teki igi: sake niku kunshin no kinki ni dansuru Nanbokuchō zuitō no sonryō tachi no dōkō kara', *Bukkyō bungaku ronshū* (Sodo Mori et al. ed., Tōkyō: Sankibo Busshorin, 1991), pp. 123-138.

²⁵⁵ XGSZ, T. 50, p. 481a.

²⁵⁶ *Jing Chu suishi ji yizhu*, p. 6.

²⁵⁷ XGSZ, T. 50, pp. 544b, 548c-549a. A story about Sengchou and the emperor can be seen in the FYZL (T. 53, p. 907a), quoted from the GSZ, though the present version of the GSZ does not have a biography of Sengchou. This story is also quoted in the *Tansou* (談藪, in *Shuyi ji deng wuzhong*), p. 9.

which are used to convey that merit can be gained by not eating meat, and that eating meat leads to negative retribution.²⁵⁸ These stories no doubt helped to further spread vegetarianism in society in general.

4.6. Vegetarianism as a Monastic Rule

As can be imagined, a new injunction lapsed with the end of Emperor Wu's dynasty, but unlike the bans on animal sacrifice whose validity relied mostly on the fate of the dynasty, vegetarian practice continued to be observed by some monastics.²⁵⁹ The reason for this was not only were both monastics and the public fully aware that the Buddha in some sūtras did advise his followers not to eat meat, but also, probably most importantly, because the banning of eating meat became a minor rule of a Bodhisattva precept manual that was entitled *Fanwang jing* (FWJ).²⁶⁰ This was the first known text to incorporate a rule against eating meat as its content. Yet, the authenticity of the text is still a subject of debate.

Traditionally, the FWJ is believed since the sixth century to be the last translation of Kumārajīva.²⁶¹ But this view cannot be attested by Sengyou's catalogue. There have been basically two opinions concerning the authenticity of the text. Although the latest study is in favour of the opinion that it is a genuine translation,²⁶² both internal and external evidence seem to show it was a composite work of the Chinese during 440 and 480.²⁶³ The second view has been strengthened by a recent, detailed

²⁵⁸ For evidences, see *Shuyi ji* (述異記), LYZDWZ, p. 98, and some stories in *Yan Zhitui jiesha xun* (顏之推誡殺訓), T. 52, pp. 294a-b.

²⁵⁹ Monks recorded to have eaten meat in later Buddhist history were not just few. For instance, see the story about the allegedly holy monk Tanxian (曇顯, fl. 555) in the Northern Qi (XGSZ, T. 50, p. 625a; GHMJ, T. 52, p. 112c). For an interesting discussion of this phenomena, see Qian Zhongshu's *Guanzhui bian*, vol. 4, pp. 1369-78.

²⁶⁰ T. 24, p. 1005b. Borrowing the title of an early important text, the *Brahmajāla sūtra* mentioned in a few translations (e.g. *Chengshi lun* 成實論, T. 32, p. 317c; DZDL, T. 25, p. 193a) and translated as *Foshuo fanwang liushi'er jian jing* (佛說梵網六十二見經, T. 1, No. 21).

²⁶¹ See an anonymous colophon collected in the CSZJJ T. 55, p. 79b-c, LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 75a, and *Zhongjing mulu*, T. 55, p. 140a, etc.

²⁶² Jing Yin, 'The Vinaya in India and China', pp. 137-141.

²⁶³ Leo M. Pruden, 'Some Notes on the *Fan-wang-ching*' (*Indian and Buddhist Studies* 15:2, 1967), p. 76; Paul Groner, 'The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai: A Study of Annen's Futsū jubosatsukai kōshaku'

study which suggests the date of the composition of the text was after 450.²⁶⁴

Forgery as it may be, the large number of hand-written copies found in the Dunhuang caves and dated between 479 and 482 may confirm what is said in the anonymous colophon that hundreds of copies were made after its 'translation'.²⁶⁵ What is more, this text was one of the two most popular versions of six similar kinds of these manuals used for the Bodhisattva ordination in the Liang dynasty.²⁶⁶ A modern scholar suggests that the FWJ was used in the Bodhisattva ordination right from the time when the ordination was introduced, which is problematic because of its date.²⁶⁷ As mentioned in previous paragraphs and shown by a few pieces of information collected in the *Chu sanzang jiji*, the Bodhisattva ordination seems to have been a popular Buddhist ritual among both monastics and laity from the Liu Song dynasty onwards. The lay candidates ranged from emperors to officials and literati.²⁶⁸ That is to say that anyone, monks and laypersons alike, who followed the manual of the FWJ was supposed to become a vegetarian. In other words, even though the emperor's new rule lost its power after the collapse of his regime, the vegetarian practice was carried on by the Buddhists who received the FWJ as their Bodhisattva precept manual.

(Robert Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 254-55.

²⁶⁴ See Funayama Tōru, 'Gikyō "Bonmou kyō" seiritsu no syomondai', *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 39, 1996, pp. 54-78.

²⁶⁵ See Chen Yuan, *Dunhuang jieyu lu*, (Beiping: Guoli zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1931), vol. 5, p. 395a.

²⁶⁶ *Chujiaren shou pusajie fa* (出家人受菩薩戒法, 'monks' guide for the Bodhisattva ordination'). Some fragments of the text exist in Pelliot's Dunhuang collections. Yan dates the text before 519, which is unlikely since the conferences were held after 519 and there was nobody, not even the emperor himself, who cited the text as a Vinaya support. See Yan Shangwen, *Liang Wudi*, pp. 149, 179. Despite the fact that no one cited the text as an authority to support banning eating meat in the conference, this text seems to have been recognised by the emperor. Huijiao (慧皎 497-554), the author of *Gaoseng zhuan*, perhaps was the first to write a commentary to the text. See LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 100a; XGSZ, T.50, p. 471b.

²⁶⁷ See Zhou Shujia, *Zhou Shujia foxue lunzhu ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, vol. 2, 1991), pp. 1059-60. For the large number of commentaries on the FWJ, and its transmission in the Tang dynasty, see Jing Yin, 'The Vinaya in India and China', pp. 141-48.

²⁶⁸ T. 55, pp. 92c, 93a. Sui emperors took the Bodhisattva ordination as well, see GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 213, 305, *Guoqing bailu*, T. 46, pp. 800a, 803a, 816c etc.

The FWJ continued to be an important guide right through the beginning of the Tang in which the text eventually dominated other manuals and became the standard one.²⁶⁹ By then vegetarianism was not a subject of debate over eating meat and the doctrine of loving-kindness and compassion, but a sanctioned Vinaya rule, one that is supposed to be observed by its receiver. Therefore, we can say that the FWJ helped to keep the vegetarian practice alive, even now, in the Chinese Saṃgha, but as being shown in this chapter, it is incorrect to say that the reason why Chinese Buddhism developed a vegetarian practice was because the Chinese had the FWJ.²⁷⁰

5. Conclusion

Like animal sacrifice, eating meat is another way of killing animals. Thus, vegetarianism is also an expression of non-killing. Buddhist vegetarianism originated in India but appears to have been expressed only in texts newly composed by some Mahāyānists, since from more than one Chinese traveller's records, no vegetarian practice was found in Indian Buddhist communities well after it had become an established Chinese Buddhist practice. One reason for the practice of Buddhist vegetarianism in Chinese society is the traditional Chinese *zhaijie* custom requiring the observation of vegetarianism and its accidental coincidence with Buddhist fasts. Yet, the popularity of vegetarian practice is also linked to many other factors, among which, apart from the participation of the laity and the circulation of some translations encouraging vegetarianism, the effort of Buddhist Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty and the popularisation of the FWJ are the most important ones.

Vegetarianism was already an ancient tradition in China. When that tradition coincided with the appealing voice from Buddhism, it was simply a matter of time before it was transplanted. The element of vegetarian practice in the Chinese *zhaijie* became a Buddhist practice through its *baguan zhai* which originally included no specific information on what to eat. As a religious practice, the *baguan zhai* attracted the interest of the literati and officials, including non-Buddhists as well as Buddhists. When the influential *Niepan jing* was translated and became popular in the life of the literati, Buddhist vegetarianism started to become general knowledge.

²⁶⁹ See Shi Zhiyi's (釋智顗 538-597) *Pusajie yishu* (菩薩戒義疏), T. 50, p. 568a.

²⁷⁰ D. Seyfort Ruegg, 'Ahimsā and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism', pp. 238-39.

Thus, more and more monastics and laity practised vegetarianism. With the growing number of new translations that strongly condemned the eating of meat and the occasional debates over the issue among influential literati, eating meat for monastics became a shameful thing which they did only in private.

In this atmosphere Emperor Wu, as a pious Buddhist and extreme vegetarian, taking his officials' advice into consideration, (and perhaps inspired by his own personal sentiment of filial piety with regard to eating meat), launched the vegetarian campaign. Emperor Wu's efforts, especially his edicts, had the force of both legal law and Vinaya regulations in Chinese Buddhism. In terms of law, it was like the ban on blood sacrifice, valid only till the end of the dynasty in which it was codified. However, in terms of its practical results, it publicised Buddhist vegetarianism in society and thereby made the people aware of the reality that Buddhists, particularly monastics, should be vegetarians. This in turn created supervision of the laity over the diet life of monastics. Thus, it is to his credit that he took the initiative to make vegetarianism a monastic rule for the monastics. Still, the continuity of his legacy was largely due to the recognition of the FWJ which makes vegetarianism a compulsory rule in the Bodhisattva ordination, a precept-giving ceremony which every member of the Chinese Saṃgha must take.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BUDDHIST TRADITION OF RELEASING ANIMALS

1. Releasing of Animals in Pre-Buddhist China

As discussed in Chapter One, for both karmic reasons and the purpose of achieving final emancipation, Buddhism promulgates loving-kindness and compassion by prohibiting its believers from killing animals or consuming their meat. From early Chinese Buddhist translations, it is clear that the Buddha not only prohibited his followers, both monastic and lay, from harming animals but also encouraged them to help animals however they could, particularly those endangered or captured. They were advised to rescue them and set them free. The Chinese Buddhists, like Buddhists of other traditions, observed the prohibitions as disciplinary rules, and practised them accordingly. Thus, there gradually developed a custom of liberating animals, which is called in Chinese *fangsheng* (放生), which literally means ‘to release living creatures’, but in practice, ‘living creatures’ normally refers to animals, such as beasts, birds, fish and insects. This custom attracted the attention of the modern scholarly world as early as the 19th century, but even the latest study on it has failed to present a detail history of its early development.¹ This chapter is an attempt to improve this situation. Section 1 of this chapter looks briefly at one aspect of the treatment that the people of pre-Buddhist China gave to animals so as to establish a Chinese cultural background that accommodated the idea of rescuing and releasing animals. A detailed investigation of the formation and development of *fangsheng* custom is carried out in Sections 2 and 3.

¹ For the earliest study on this practice, see M. J. J. DeGroot, ‘Miséricorde Envers les Animaux dans le Bouddhisme Chinois’, *T’oung Pao* III, 1892, pp. 466-89. for the latest, see Henry Shiu, Leah Stokes, “Buddhist Animal Release Practices: Historic, Environmental, Public Health and Economic Concerns”, *Contemporary Buddhism*, 9:2, November, 2008, pp. 181-196.

1.1. The Official Restrictions on Killing Wild Animals

The source of animals used in sacrifice and food consumption in early China was mainly from hunting, which was commonly seen as a form of military activity, ritual killing, or entertainment.² Hunting took place in the wild as well as in animal parks.³ Although, as mentioned previously, early China did not have a rule of non-killing that could directly benefit animal welfare, hunting was done according to strict regulations. Basically, the regulations were of two forms: first, the general rule prescribing that regular hunting was allowed only in a certain season of the year, and second, specific measures preventing the extinction of animals through hunting.

There are quite a few texts alleging the hunting regulations to have been laid down in the Shang or in an unknown time of antiquity, but the consideration that people should not kill animals excessively is first expressed in a passage of the *Zuozhuan* which condemns the pleasure hunt by stating that in ancient times the duke would not engage in the killing of animals unless the meat were needed for the sacrifice ritual.⁴ The third century *Diwang shiji* (帝王世紀 ‘chronicle of the generations of emperors and kings’) also says that the Emperor Yan (炎帝, another legendary ruler believed to be a peer of the Yellow Emperor) taught people how to grow crops in order to prevent them from excessive killing.⁵ The *Zhouli* (周禮 ‘rituals of the Zhou’) is perhaps the most complete work on hunting regulations. It prescribes rules for seasonal hunting:⁶ the killings from the

² Lewis, SVEC, p. 18, fn. 6-7, pp. 21-22, 145. This was described in some oracle inscriptions and Warring States texts, and even portrayed on the bronze cowry shell containers. See Yi Xuezhong, ‘Jinning Shizhaishan shi-erhao muzhu beiqi shang renwu diaoxiang kaoshi’ (*Kaogu xuebao* 4, 1987), pp. 426-27.

³ Yang Xiong (楊雄 53 BCE-18 CE) clearly mentioned that the ‘purpose of hunting parks and preserves was the maintenance of the nation: firstly they served the altars of the gods, and secondly, they provided important guests of the state’. See his ‘Yulie fu’ (漁獵賦), WX 8: 20a. For the history of animal parks in early China, see Edward H. Schafer, ‘Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China’ (*Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XI, 1968), p. 323; Lewis, SVEC, pp. 21, 151-154; Sterckx, ADEC, pp. 105, 109, 111-112.

⁴ CQZZ, yingong 5: 41-43; Sterckx, ADEC, p. 145-46.

⁵ *Diwang shiji jicun* (Xu Zongyuan coll. & ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), p. 13.

⁶ A passage in the *Guoyu* (GY-lunyuA 178), which was attributed by Sima Qian to Confucius’ contemporary Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (see HS 62: 2735), provides the

autumn hunting were to be used in sacrifices at the imperial tombs and ancestral temples in the capital, and regular competitive hunting was to take place in the winter.⁷ In the Han *Liji*'s section on rituals of antiquity, the prescription for the regularity of hunting carried out by different personages is also provided. For example, the Son of Heaven and the vassals went hunting three times every year if they had no important affairs (大事), which refers to wars.⁸ Normally, the hunting season started when the game animals seemed most abundant.⁹ It naturally follows, as Sterckx writes, that: 'animals killed out of season were not to be sold on the markets, and the Son of Heaven should not eat and sacrifice pregnant animals'.¹⁰ Therefore we find the *Liji* stating that without a reason, gentlemen do not kill oxen, grandees do not kill sheep, and scholarly officers do not kill dogs and pigs.¹¹ In fact, gentlemen should not even trample on the species that contain *xueqi* (血氣 'blood and breath').¹² Again the *Liji* quotes Confucius' words saying that 'trees are fallen and animals killed only at the proper seasons'; to do otherwise is contrary to filial piety.¹³ Thus, the seasonal logic for hunting is linked with the central Confucian concept of ethics.

The practice of killing animals or going hunting only in accordance with the seasons has been confirmed by the newly discovered Qin legal code written on bamboo strip and dated as written during 262-217 BCE.¹⁴ Furthermore, Sterckx has noted two examples showing that these regulations were followed in the Han dynasty. Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (漢武帝 i.e. 劉徹 156- 78 BCE) 'is reported to have refrained from catching cranes on one occasion since it was the spring season during which the use of nets was not permitted', and 'as a response to the appearance of spirit birds during the previous summer and spring, Emperor Xuan (漢宣帝 i.e. 劉詢 r.73-49BCE) issued an edict in 63 BCE

seasonal logic behind hunting regulations, which are again associated with an idealized era in antiquity. See Sterckx, ADEC, p. 144, for other references.

⁷ *Zhouli* SBCK 7: 13b, 14b, 15a-b; Lewis, SVEC, p. 145.

⁸ LJJJ (wangzhi)12: 333.

⁹ LJJJ (quliC) 5: 122.

¹⁰ LSCQS (jiquji) 9: 467; LJJJ (quliC) 5: 122; Sterckx, ADEC, p. 144.

¹¹ LJJJ (yuzao) 29: 783.

¹² Sterckx, ADEC, p. 77.

¹³ LJJJ (jiyi) 46: 1227; *Da-Dai Liji* (SBCK) 4: 11b; HNHL zhushu 9: 147. Sterckx, ADEC, p. 145.

¹⁴ *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian*, p. 26; Sterckx, ADEC, p. 145.

instructing' residents of 'the metropolitan areas not to search out nests for eggs during those seasons or fire pellet shots at' birds in flight.¹⁵

Apart from restrictions on hunting in inappropriate seasons, there were measures preventing other forms of exhaustive hunting. Five particular rules (五犯, 'five breaches'), for instance, were designed to prescribe what type of animals could not be hunted or killed: people were asked not to kill fawn (不麝), destroy birds' eggs (不卵), not to kill pregnant animals (不殺胎), not to slaughter young animals (不殀天), and not to totally destroy whole families of animals (不覆巢).¹⁶ The spirit of these rules is approved by the Confucian tradition. Confucius is said to have praised one of his disciples for throwing back undersized fish.¹⁷ The *Xunzi* (荀子) also mentions that 'sage-kings of antiquity would never disturb the creeks and waters of breeding tortoises and fish with their nets or poisonous medicines'.¹⁸

The reason for introducing all these regulations and measures seems to have been for the purpose of preserving hunting resources; seasonal hunting and bans on killing young animals are meant to leave time for the animals breeding and maturation. In fact, having praised the sage-kings for not disordering the animals' breeding and growing, the *Xunzi* also adds 'so that there will be plenty of game and many trees to use'. This spirit of preservation in fact is reflected in Mencius' statement 'that if close-meshed nets were not used in large ponds, there would be more fish and turtles than anyone could eat'.¹⁹

1.2. Releasing Animals out of Benevolence

Aside from self-interested regulations there were also isolated cases which showed that there were some who were extremely kind towards animals. The first person believed to have shown concern for animals was Tang, the first King of the Shang dynasty. It is said that once Tang went out of the city and

¹⁵ HS 6: 211, 8: 258, Sterckx's words are inside the quotation marks, ADEC, p. 145.

¹⁶ LSCQJS (mengchujì) 1: 2; LJJJ (wangzhi) 12: 335

¹⁷ LSCQJS (jubei) 18: 1226, HNHL zhushu 9: 306-9; Sterckx, ADEC, p. 144.

¹⁸ XZJJ, (ZZJC, vol. 2) wangzhi 9: 105, Sterckx, ADEC, p. 144.

¹⁹ MZZY (ZZJC vol 1) lianghuiwangA 1: 57; Sterckx, ADEC, p. 144.

saw someone who had set nets on all four sides in a field praying, ‘(animals) fall from the sky, come out from the ground and from all four directions will be all caught in my nets’. Tang said, ‘Hey! (This would) exhaust them! Who else apart from Jie would do such a thing?’ Tang removed three sides of the net, leaving one side then instructed him to pronounce another prayer, ‘in the past spiders made nets (from which) today’s people learned to weave. If you want to go to the left, go to the left. If you want to go to the right, go to the right! ... I catch only those which do not listen to this order!’ The states to the South of Han heard this and said, ‘Tang’s virtue even extends to the birds and beasts!’²⁰

湯見祝網者，置四面，其祝曰：‘從天墜者，從地出者，從四方來者，皆離吾網’。湯曰：‘嘻！盡之矣。非桀其孰為此也？’湯收其三面，置其一面，更教祝曰：‘昔蛛蝥作網罟，今之人學紓。欲左者左，欲右者右……吾取其犯令者。’漢南之國聞之曰：‘湯之德及禽獸矣！’

Tang’s concern is indicated by another rule which was apparently derived from an anecdote which describes a king of antiquity who had twice chased a bird in the forest without catching it; he also failed a third time. Suspecting a local person of scaring away the bird, he was going to have him killed, but at the persuasion of his ministers, he set that man free.²¹ Based on this story, a rule called *sanqu* (三驅 ‘three chases’) was set for hunting, requiring the hunter to chase the hunted no more than three times.²²

Two anecdotes further illustrate people’s kindness towards animals, both of which have been retold in Sterckx’s book. One tells of ‘the Duke Jing of the Qi State (齊景公 547-489 BCE) who once robbed a sparrow’s nest but put the fledglings back when he noticed that they were too weak’.

²⁰ LSCQJS (yiyong)10: 561, 3: 77-8. Slightly different and briefer versions can be found in SJ 3: 95 and XXXZ (zhaishi) 5: 146. The belief that sages’ kindness could reach animals can also be seen in a work of the 3rd century BCE called *Sanlüe* (三略). See Xu Baolin ed., *Huangshi gong Sanlüe qianshuo* (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1986), p. 100.

²¹ *Zhouyi gujing jinzh* (antt. by Gao Heng, Beijing: zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 185. *Yanzi chunqiu jishi*, vol. 2, p. 89; Andreas Ernst Janousch, ‘The Reform of Imperial Ritual’, p. 138, fns. 108-114.

²² HS 27A: 1319; *Liangdu fu* (兩都賦) WX 1: 24b. This is Gao Heng’s interpretation. He may have followed some earlier ones. But in translating Zhang Heng’s rhythmized prose, David Knechtges renders it as the ‘three-side battle’, ‘a hunting technique in which the quarry is flushed out on three sides only, allowing the animals an escape route on one side’. Quoted in Sterckx’s, ADEC, p. 143.

His Prime Minister Yan Ying (晏嬰) greatly praised and congratulated him for his deed, saying that he did what a sage would have normally done in that situation, and therefore had the basic quality of a sage-ruler who ruled the whole of China.²³ The second anecdote is about a servant by the name of Qin Xiba (秦西巴 fl. 5th. B. C. E.) ‘who was asked to bring home a fawn that had been caught by his master during a hunt. Followed by the crying mother deer and unable to bear its lamentations, Qin set the fawn free’. As a result of what he did, Qin was relieved of his position. However, three months later, the master hired him to teach his son on the grounds that if he did not have the heart to hurt a young animal, he would be benevolent enough to look after young children.²⁴

A few Han texts also mention other persons who are said to have been extremely kind towards animals. For instance, ‘the virtuous character, Tian Zifang (田子方, fl. 4th BCE) offered to buy an old horse worn out by years of public service’ because he believed ‘that deploying a horse’s strength while young but casting it aside when old was breaching’ the spirit of

²³ *Yanzi chunqiu jishi* 5: 312-13; SYSZ (guide) 5: 113. Words inside the quotation marks are

Sterckx’s, ADEC, 146.

²⁴ *Hanfeizi jishi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958) 7: 436; HNHL renjianxun 18: 594-95; The translation is Sterckx’s, ADEC, 146. Intriguingly enough, part of this anecdote resembles part of a Jātaka story found in the *Faju piyu jing* (T. 4, p. 596b). In this story, a hunter was ordered by his king to present a wild goose every day because the latter liked eating goose meat. One day the hunter captured the leader of a group of five hundred wild geese. All the way back to the palace he was followed by a goose crying to the point of bleeding from its mouth. Touched deeply by the goose’s selfless devotion to its king, he released the goose king. Having heard what had happened, the human king thenceforth renounced the eating of goose meat. With some alteration the story is also found in the *Da fangbianfo bao-en jing* (T. 3, p. 147c), and in two places in the SSL (T. 23, p. 263a-c). Both texts appeared in China later than the *Faju piyu jing*.

The *Faju piyu jing* was translated jointly by Faju and Fali before the year 307 (CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 10a). No other Chinese Buddhist translation earlier than this one seems to contain this story. The early Chinese texts that contain the anecdote are a pre-Qin text—before 221 BCE — the *Hanfeizi* (韓非子), and a Western Han text, the *Huainanzi* (淮南子) which was written after 140-141 BCE (see Xiong Lihui, ‘*Huainanzi xiezuo shijian kao*’, *Wuhan daxue xuebao* 5, 1994, p. 107). Both texts are accepted to be genuine. Thus, the partial structural similarities between the Chinese anecdote and the Jātaka story are highly likely to be coincidental, if not without a tinge of Chinese influence.

benevolence.²⁵ According to Lü Buwei, Tian was once a disciple of Zigong (子貢 b.520), Confucius' disciple. LSCQJS (dangran) 2: 96. Similarly, a Han text tells of Confucius' disciple Gao Chai (高柴, b. ca. 521 BCE) who was said to have been so compassionate that he intentionally avoided killing even insects and worms from his childhood onwards.²⁶ He was mentioned in later sources together with the kind hermit Zhe Xiang (折象) of Shu (蜀, modern Sichuan province).²⁷

The above anecdotes portray compassion towards animals as a sign of people's innate benevolence, and are the earliest Chinese examples of releasing animals out of kindness.

Other noteworthy cases of releasing animals are recorded in two standard histories and a person's writing. A national event is mentioned in passing in the 'fengshan shu' (封禪書 'book of imperial sacrifices') section of the *Shiji* (史記 'records of the historian') and in the first part of the *jiaosi* (郊祀) section of the *Hanshu* (漢書 'book of the Han'). It was an event, a deliberate and large-scale release of a collection of animals, though it never developed into an independent custom. It took place in 110 BCE, when Emperor Han Wudi performed the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices on Mt. Tai.²⁸

'To make the sacrificial ceremony more grandiose, strange beasts, flying creatures, white pheasants, and some other kinds of creatures from distant regions were set free. Animals such as male rhinoceroses and elephants were not used [for that purpose], [since] they all were brought to Mount Tai to be sacrificed to the Houtu'.

縱遠方奇獸蜚禽及白雉諸物，頗以加禮。兕牛犀象之屬不用，皆至泰山祭后土。

In Sima Xiangru's *Fengshan wen* (封禪文) we are told that someone in the Western Han found a tortoise which was believed to have been released in the Zhou Dynasty.²⁹

²⁵ HNHL renjianxun18: 622. Words inside question marks are Sterckx's, ADEC, p. 146. Other early texts containing this story are listed in his ADEC, p. 291, en. 108.

²⁶ See KZJYSZ 3: 76.

²⁷ See HHS 82A: 2720.

²⁸ SJ 28: 1398; HS 25A: 1235. The translation is Sterckx's (ADEC, p. 117). Some changes have been made to it.

²⁹ WX 48:3a.

The national releasing of animals seems to be purely cultic and implies no conscious concern for animal welfare. The reason for releasing the animals is not clear, but it was not done out of kindness towards animals. Otherwise, other animals would not have been sacrificed. Yet, the releasing of the tortoise surely had some cultural impact on later generations, and this will become clear in due course of our discussions. Also, relevant is a custom of releasing birds, which is mentioned in post-Han texts and was considered to have been carried on since the Warring States period. This custom is the subject of the next section.

1.3. The Custom of Releasing Doves

The third century Confucian *Kongcongzi* (孔叢子) and a classic of apparently fourth century forgery, the *Liezi* (列子), record a custom of deliberately releasing a certain kind of animal developed in a small region of northern China.³⁰ Since this custom and particularly one term occurring

³⁰ Both texts claim to be classics of Confucianism and Daoism respectively. The former is a work attributed to an early Han person named Kong Fu (孔鮒 ca. 264-208 BCE), the latter claims to have been written by a Warring States figure of the Daoist School by the name of Lie Yukou (列御寇 fl. 4th cent. BCE). However, new studies show they both are not as genuine as they claim to be. For a study on the *Kongcong zi*, see Yoav Ariel, *K'ung-Ts'ung-Tzu: the K'ung Family Master's Anthology*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989. The authenticity of the *Liezi* has caught the attention of scholars since the 8th century. Most scholars of Mainland China consider it a forgery, while the Taiwanese scholar Xiao Dengfu believes it is a genuine work with later interpolations. For studies on the dating of the text, see Hiän-Lin Dschi, 'Lieh-tzu and Buddhist Sūtra: A Note on the Author of Lieh-tzu and the Date of its Composition' (*Studia Serica* 9:1, 1950), p. 18; Yang Bojun, 'Cong Hanyushi de jiaodu lai jiating Zhongguo guji xiezuo niandai de yige shili: *Liezi* zhushu niandai kao' (*Xinjianshe* 7, 1956), pp. 38-47; also his *Liezi jishi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1979) (fulu3) 8: 287-301; Graham, A. C., 'The Date and Composition of *Liehtzy* 列子' (*Asia Major* [New Series] 8:2, 1960-61, pp. 139-198; Xiao Dengfu, 'Liezi yu fojing' (*Chengong daxue xuebao* [renwenpian] 17, 1982), p. 31, *Liezi tanwei* (Taiwan: Xin wenfeng chubanshe, 1990), pp. 9-18, 49-56; Ma Zhenya, 'Liezi zhong guanyu chengshufa de yunyong: jianlun Liezi de chengshu niandai' (*Dongbei shida xuebao* 2, 1995), pp. 76-81; Ma Da, 'Liezi "bianwei wenzi jilüe" kuangzheng' (*Hengyang shizhuan xuebao* 2, 1995), pp. 38-43, 'Dui Qingdai guanyu Liezi bianwei de kuangzheng' (*Hengyang shizhuan xuebao* 5, 1996), pp. 43-48, and "'Rusheng zhi ming" yu "Yan Yuan zhi shou" kaoyi: Ma Xulun Liezi weishu kao kuangzheng erti' (*Zhangjiakou shizhuan xuebao* 1, 1998), pp. 15-36; Tan Jiajian, 'Liezi gushi yuanyuan kaolüe' (*Shehui kexue zhanxian* 3, 2000), pp. 136-144; Seo Junewon, 'The Liezi 列子: the Vision of the World Interpreted by a

in one of these two versions indicate that it might have something to do with a similar Buddhist practice, the reader is asked to tolerate the following relatively detailed treatment on this custom. In so doing, it is hoped that it may prove helpful when we come to scrutinize the similar Buddhist practice further on.

The records of the custom in these two texts are slightly different in word and in moral message. Here, we quote the whole story from both texts. In the *Kongcongzi* the story goes:³¹

The people of Handan on New Year's Day presented sparrows which were ornamented with varicoloured cords, to the King of Zhao (fl. 3th BCE). The King was greatly pleased. Shen Shu told this to Zishun (fl. 3rd B. C. E.) who asked (the King), 'Your Majesty, what are you going to do with them?' [The King] replied, '[I will] have them released on New Year's Day so as to show the giving of life.' Zishun said, 'This indeed is a vulgar practice of back-street but not the norm of the ancestral kings...'

邯鄲之民以正月之旦獻雀於趙王，而綴之以五彩，趙王大悅。申叔以告子順。順曰：‘王何以為也？’對曰：‘正旦放之，示有生也’。子順曰：‘此委巷之鄙事爾，非先王之法也……’。

The *Liezi* has the story this way:³²

The people of Han-tan (had the habit), on New Year's Day, of presenting [live] doves to Chien-tzū (d. 458 BCE). This greatly pleased Chien-tzū, who liberally rewarded those [who made the presentation]. To a guest who asked the meaning of this [custom], Chien-tzū explained that the release of living creatures [*fengsheng* 放生] on New Year's Day was a manifestation of kindness. 'But', said the stranger, 'if people, knowing of Your Lordship's desire to release them, compete with one another in catching them, those that die in the process must indeed be numerous. If you really wish to let them live, the best way would be to prohibit the people from

Forged Text' (PhD dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2000), pp. 26-36, 89.

³¹ *Kongcong zi*, SBBY 5:8a-b. This version is quoted in the TPYL 29: 136a-b. A briefer version appears also in the same collection (921:4087a-b). Derk Bodde only refers to the briefer one which he says is less developed than the one found in the *Liezi*. Derk Bodde, 'Lieh-tzū and the Doves: A Problem of Dating' (AM, 7:1-2, 1959), p. 25. This custom seems to have been in vogue in North-west China during the Jin dynasty as well. See *Yuanhun zhi jiaozhu*, p. 41.

³² *Liezi jishi* (shuofu) 8: 269. This passage was translated by L. Giles in his *Taoist Teachings from the Book of Lieh Tzū* (London, 2nd printing, 1925), quoted in Derk Bodde's 'Lieh-tzū and the Doves', p. 25.

catching them at all. For if they have to be caught in order to be released, the kindness does not compensate for the cruelty'. Chien-tzū agreed: 'this is so.'

邯鄲之民以正月之旦獻鳩於簡子。簡子大悅，厚賞之。客問其故。簡子曰：「正旦放生，示有恩也」。客曰：「民知君之欲放之，競而捕之，死者眾矣！君如欲生之，不若禁民勿捕。捕而放之，恩過不相補矣！」簡子曰：「然」。

As the two passages evidently show, there are several differences between these two versions. First, the birds released are *que* (雀 sparrows, though possibly magpies) in the *Kongcongzi*, and *jiu* (鳩 doves) in the *Liezi*. Second, the phrase *fangzhi* (放之) in the first text is replaced with the word *fangsheng* in the second text. Third, the phrase (示有生 'to show the giving of life') is substituted by (示有恩 'to show being humane') in *Liezi*'s version. Fourth, the time of the custom has been dated back to the third century BCE in the first version, but to at least the fifth century BCE in the second. Fifth, it is the King in the first version who receives the presentation but a lord in the second. Sixth and importantly, the remarks from the interlocutors of the two versions were drastically different in implication: in the first version, it is implied that releasing birds was not the practice of ancient Kings, but some vulgar custom, while the second remark criticizes the practice for being cruel to the birds.

The second and third changes are particularly significant. In the Warring States period and in later times, the word *en* (恩) is best understood to mean *ren* (仁 'mercy') as in the *Liji*.³³ It also means 'gratitude', as suggested by the *Shuowen jiezi*, especially during and after the Later Han.³⁴ On the one hand, by taking the first meaning of the word and considering the use of the word *fangsheng*, plus the remarks made by the interlocutor, the second version of the story might have something to do with Buddhism. On the other hand, if the word is taken to mean 'gratitude', there will be for the time being a difficulty in understanding what the gratitude shown by releasing birds was for, unless it is taken to imply the gratitude to the doves for saving the first Han emperor's life—a story which was mingled with the dove-releasing custom in another two texts which are considered next.

³³ LJJ (*sangfu sizhi*) 61: 1469.

³⁴ SWJZ 10B: 218.

From two texts of the Six Dynasties, Fu Shen's (伏琛 4th cent.) *Sanqi lueji* (三齊略記) and Lu Cheng's (陸澄 425-494) *Dili shu* (地理書 'book of geography'), we find the custom has changed.³⁵ Except for changes like describing the birds as doves in both texts, and the place being changed from Handan (邯鄲 a city in present-day Hebei province) to Xingyang (滎陽 a county in present-day Henan province), this custom was regarded as the result of another earlier Han incident. According to the source, the Duke of Pei (沛公 royal title of Liu Bang 劉邦 256-195 BCE who later became the first emperor of the Han dynasty), who was defeated in a battle with his rival Xiang Yu (項羽 232-202 BCE), escaped and hid in a well, above which there were a pair of doves. Having arrived at the scene and seen the doves perching above the well, Xiang Yu did not believe his guard's suggestion that the Duke of Pei must have hidden in the well, and asked 'Why are the doves cooing above it if there were someone beneath it?' Xiang Yu left and thus Liu Bang survived. From here, the Jin text suggests 'It is probably because of this [incident] that later in the Han [there arose the custom of] releasing doves on New Year's Day.'³⁶ However, Lu Cheng's text retells this story with certainty, saying that 'it is because of this [incident] that in the Han period [there arose the custom of] releasing doves on New Year's Day.'³⁷

In the Jin text, the connection between the custom and the story of doves accidentally saving Liu Bang's life was still simply suggested. It may have been the case that the custom of releasing doves and the story of the doves saving Liu Bang started to merge shortly before or during the Eastern Jin (317-420). In effect, this speculation can be attested to by an Eastern Han text in which the aforementioned incident of Liu Bang and Xiang Yu is told in a story about a well. This story was first recorded in the *Fengsu tongyi*, in which the author Ying Shao links another practice with the incident—the custom of presenting a dove-staff (which might be

³⁵ The *Sanqi lueji* was lost but some paragraphs are quoted in the *Shuofu* as well as the TPYL. The dating of the text can be found in the *Ershiwu shi bubian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956, vol. 3), p. 3741a. Cf. Bodde, 'Lieh-Tzū', p. 29.

³⁶ There are still other versions with the difference of the places where the custom was practised. Yan Yun's (殷芸 471-529) *Xiaoshuo* (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), p. 3. Cf. Derk Bodde, 'Lieh-Tzū', p. 29.

³⁷ Bodde, 'Lieh-Tzū', p. 29.

a walking stick with a dove carved on its top) to the elders in the Han times.³⁸

It is clear that the custom of releasing doves and the story about the well were two different things, but what concerns us here is when the custom of releasing doves developed. Although the *Fengsu tongyi* was designed especially to record information on ritual practice and popular customs in all parts of the country, the received text, even including passages collected by modern scholars from other texts represents only about one third of the entirety of the original.³⁹ Thus, its silence on the custom of releasing doves can only be due to three possibilities. One, the original text did contain the custom, but it may have been lost. Two, the text did not record the custom, for by the time of its compilation it may have not been widespread. The last, and most unlikely, the author of the work was not aware of the existence of the custom. Any of these possibilities may be true, as no definite date for the origins of the custom can be drawn from this text, however it may assure us that the custom of

³⁸ FSTYJS (yiwen) 407-408. Also see *Shuijing zhu jiao* (Wang Guowei ed., Shanghai renming chubanshe, 1984), 7: 248. According to the HHS (zhi5: 3124) the gift, which is called 'jade-stick', was given in the second month of the autumn season. The receiver must be in his/her seventy. For those who were eighty or ninety years old, the gift would be bigger. The text also explains that giving a dove-staff to the elders hoped they would not have swallowing problem, because the dove was believed to be a bird that never choked. Sterckx, ADEC, 174. In fact there have been a dozen of such staffs discovered in Han tombs in different parts of China. For an example, see *Wuwei Handai yijian*, p. 22a. In this book, a passage taken from a bamboo strip about the distributing of dove-staffs to the elders is also included. There could have been such a practice in other parts of China. A bronze post with a bird on its top was discovered in Sichuan and dated back to the 12th BCE, see Edward L. Shaughnessy ed., *New Sources of Early Chinese History*, p. 122. Interestingly enough, the practice of presenting doves had existed since the early Zhou, or possibly earlier, for the Han text, the *Zhouli*, states that in the Zhou the official surnamed Luo in charge of raising birds presented doves to the court in the second month of the spring season for the sake of all elders of the country. In the winter he made jackets out of bird feathers. In the first month of the year, he caught spring birds and made tributes of doves, which were used to feed the elders in the country (*Zhouli*, SBCK 7: 32b). A source shows that this practice was well preserved, even in the Eastern Han. HHS zhi5: 3124; Sterckx, ADEC 174. Furthermore, doves or pigeons were probably favoured by the Chinese during or before Han times: archaeologists have found a nicely decorated Han bronze 'dove chariot' which it is suggested was a toy for children. See Wang Huixia, 'Gupu hunhou de Handai yishupin: tongjiuche' (*Zhongyuan wewu* 6, 2002), p. 49.

³⁹ FSTYJS (preface), 3-4.

releasing doves and the story of the doves saving Liu Bang were originally separate. For a reliable conclusion, we need to go back to the two early texts that record the custom, but since there is no information on the original *Liezi*, one can say virtually nothing about whether it recorded the custom or not. That leaves us with the *Kongcongzi* as the first extant work to record the custom.

As pointed out by Yoav Ariel, doubts about the authorship of the *Kongcongzi* arose beginning from the Southern Song dynasty (南宋 1127-1279). Beginning with the observation that the earliest quotation of the text was made by Huangfu Mi (皇甫謐 fl.250.) in his *Diwang shiji*, also with its other features verified exclusively by the third century CE sources adding weight to his argument, Ariel invalidates the traditional Chinese verdict that the *Kongcongzi* was written by Kong Fu or some Han figure, and instead suggests that the text may have been compiled by someone other than Kong Fu before 250CE.⁴⁰

Thus, it might be well imagined that the custom was in practice at least in the first part of the third century C E. Considering the fact that the *Liezi* reflects certain Buddhist ideas, and borrows phrases from Buddhist texts, the term *fangsheng* that occurs in the *Liezi* version of the dove custom may be attributable to the impact of Buddhist animal-releasing teachings or activity.⁴¹

The next section is intended to explore the Buddhist sources on *fangsheng*, and to show how the teaching of *fangsheng* may predate the custom described in the *Liezi*.

2. The Buddhist Practice of Releasing Animals Prior to the 5th Century

Although no sources show that in Indian Buddhist history was there ever an animal releasing custom or practice found in the earliest Indian Buddhist written documents, Emperor Aśoka's edicts engraved on rocks and pillars do show that the greatest Buddhist ruler had some concerns about animal welfare. In the RE, the King was recorded to have ordered in all his territories the establishment of two kinds of medical treatments for

⁴⁰ Yoav Ariel, *K'ung-Ts'ung-Tzu*, pp. 3, 17, 57-8.

⁴¹ For the borrowings of the *Liezi* from Buddhist texts, see Xiao Dengfu, 'Liezi yu fojing' (*Chenggong daxue xuebao* [renwenpian] 17, 1982), pp. 31-46.

both human beings and cattle.⁴² Some time later, another edict inscribed on a pillar ordered subjects to plant banyan trees and dig wells on both sides of the roads so as to provide shade and water for travellers and animals.⁴³

After the reign of Aśoka, there is no evidence showing that these practices of kindness had been continued. Buddhist texts however, especially those belonging to the Mahāyāna tradition, do convey ideas concerning animal welfare and promote practices of preserving and liberating animals. These practices may have developed from the spirit of protecting animals through self-sacrifice, which, as demonstrated in Chapter One, has its basis in the Buddhist teaching of compassion.⁴⁴ In other words, releasing animals should also be regarded as another positive manifestation of this spirit.

2.1. The Buddhist Teaching on the Releasing of Living Creatures

It has been mentioned earlier that the first Chinese impression of Buddhism's principles was that the religion showed great care for all sentient beings and liked them to live, hating them to be killed. This impression was gained before Buddhist texts were properly translated into Chinese in the Later Han. Although the alleged earliest known Chinese translation, the *Futu jing* (浮屠經 'sūtra of the Buddha')—which could be considered as rather a general and collective name for the sūtras of the Buddha than a particular Buddhist scripture—, was made in 2 BCE, due to the lack of concrete information in the aforementioned text, one can not be sure if teachings related to kindness towards animals was mentioned.⁴⁵ As a result we have to look at other translations for information.

Shi Sengyou was the first to attempt to track down the beginning of *fangsheng* activity in the Buddhist tradition. In the twelfth fascicle of his *Chu sanzang jiji*, he devotes a whole section to tracing back various religious practices of the Buddhist tradition in India and China alike; in doing so, he wishes 'to vindicate the present [practices] through knowing

⁴² G. Sinivasa Murti, *Edicts of Aśoka*, p. 5.

⁴³ Murti, *Edicts of Aśoka*, p. 117.

⁴⁴ The two examples mentioned in page 14 should be perfect illustration of such a spirit.

⁴⁵ Fang Guangchang, 'Futu jing kao' (*Fayin* 6, 1998), pp. 24-7; Liu Yi's 'Futu jing xiaoyi' (*Shoudu shifan daxue xuebao* 1, 2000), pp. 24-8.

the past (明古以證今).⁴⁶ The entries on customs and practices which he organized ranges from the making of the Buddha's statue to various kinds of Buddhist activities practised by the Chinese emperors up to his time.⁴⁷ In regards to the origin of the *fangsheng* custom (放生緣記), he directs our attention to the fourth fascicle of the *Za ahan jing*.⁴⁸ There, a story tells of a Brahman elder, who, after having gathered and tied up many kinds of animals for a great sacrifice, went to ask the Buddha's opinion on animal sacrifice. The Buddha strongly opposed the practice and suggested that the Brahman not do it. In the end, the Brahman happily changed his mind, and after consulting the Buddha, a young Brahman priest went to release all the animals.⁴⁹

Unless Sengyou believed that any Āgama sūtra undoubtedly predated the scriptures of other genres because they were among the earlier scriptures that the Buddha preached, the *Za ahan jing* was translated between 435 and 443 CE by Guṇabhadra, making it much later than another translation carrying an even more obvious message of protecting animals. Even if Sengyou believed that the Āgama sūtras appeared earlier than other scriptures, it still seems rather farfetched to consider this event as the origin of the tradition of releasing animal, as the passage evidently indicates that the Buddha's only purpose in this discourse is to condemn the Brahmanic practice of animal sacrifice, but not to focus on *fangsheng*.

In doctrinal terms, the first Chinese translation to directly encourage people to protect animals through rescuing and releasing them is the second century scripture, the *Chengju guangming dingyi jing*. In this one fascicle text, there are two passages in which the Buddha urges his followers to protect animals. The teachings of both passages are clear in purpose.

In one passage of the text, the Buddha tells a youth of the noble class that he unfailingly practised the six virtuous deeds (六德之行 i.e. 'the six perfections' 六波羅蜜 as later translated) for countless lives before he finally became a Buddha. He then goes on to expound each virtuous deed. On the observation of the great disciplinary rules or great precepts, 'guangjie' (廣戒), he speaks thus:

⁴⁶ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 90b.

⁴⁷ T. 55, pp. 90b-93b.

⁴⁸ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 91a.

⁴⁹ ZAHJ, T. 2, pp. 24b-25c.

What is meant by the great precept? By the great precept [it means that a practitioner] should be able to control the three bodily disasters, to guard against the four faults of the mouth, and to constrain the three vices of the mind. By bodily deeds, [it means] if he sees any creatures, [including] the crawling and the wriggling, [he should feel] sympathy and sorry [for them], set them free and let them live, and return them to water and land and leave them in peace.⁵⁰

何謂廣戒？曰廣戒者，謂能攝身之三殃，守口之四過，檢意之三惡。身行者，若見一切眾生，蚊行蠕動，愍而哀傷，縱而活之，隨其水陸還而安之。

In another passage of the same text, while suggesting to those living a busy, official life on how to obtain the state of *samādhi* (三昧, i.e. *guangming dingyi* 光明定意, ‘concentrated mind of bright light’), the Buddha says that fifteen extra practices should be done, apart from worshiping and reciting this sūtra. Among the fifteen, the second is *huosheng* (活生), ‘to let living creatures live’, which follows the prohibition against taking life.⁵¹

It is clear from a cursory glance at these two passages that the releasing of animals mainly means rescuing or helping those that are in danger or in trouble, and that the practice is so important that it is an indispensable requirement to fulfil the second *pāramitā* (‘perfection’) and additionally, as a subordinate practice to gain the state of concentration.

Although there is no convincing evidence to suggest that this text gave rise to the *fangsheng* activity of the late third century, judging by the fact that it had been read and quoted by a few persons by the middle of the fourth century, it seems to have had a degree of popularity. Among those who read it was the eminent scholar monk Shi Dao-an (釋道安 314-386),⁵² who was said to have memorized the sūtra within one day while working in the field, a fact very much impressed his teacher. However, the obvious impact of this sūtra is reflected in the work of Xi Chao, since,

⁵⁰ CGDJ, T. 15, p. 453a. There are three other Western Jin translations that also contain passages similar to this one. See, *Jianbei yiqie zhide jing* (漸備一切智德經), T. 10, p. 465c; *Shengjing* (生經), T. 3, p. 75b; *Foshuo Wenshushili jinglü jing*, T. 14, p. 450b. This part seems to have been rephrased by Xi Chao in his *Fengfa yao*. But his rephrasing has not made any semantic change. T. 52, p. 86b; Kenneth Ch'en, ‘Apropos the *Feng-Fa-Yao* of Hsi Ch'ao’ (TP, L, 1963), p. 82.

⁵¹ T. 15, p. 457a.

⁵² CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 108a; GSZ, T. 50, p. 351c, p. 383b.

apart from the rephrasing he made based on the passage quoted above, at least three other passages of this sūtra were quoted by him.⁵³

A similar emphasis on rescuing animals that are in danger can also be found in the *Liudu jijing* (六度集經 ‘collected sūtras on the six perfections’),⁵⁴ a text is to be utilised below since it contains some crucial evidence for the origin of the custom.

2.2. Stories Concerning the Releasing of Turtles

The translation previously mentioned as containing a typical example of releasing animals in the Chinese custom is the *Liudu jijing*. Actually a mixed collection of Jātaka and Avadāna stories, it was translated in 247 by Kang Senghui (康僧會 d. 280). This text has been neglected as far as the custom of releasing animals is concerned, but it was the most important text in the formation of the custom in Chinese Buddhism, for it contains a detailed story of setting an animal free.

The story is relatively long, and what follows is only a brief account. One day, a great householder (大理家 i.e. the Buddha in one of his previous lives) of a certain country, who was a devoted Buddhist philanthropist, was walking in the market and saw a soft-shelled turtle on sale. He asked the seller for its price. The latter, knowing that he was rich and kind towards all kinds of sentient beings, told him that it was worth one million (coins), and hinted that if the philanthropist did not buy it, he would eat it. The philanthropist immediately agreed to buy the turtle and took it home. He washed it and cured its wounds, then released it into a river.⁵⁵ The rest of the story tells how the turtle repaid the householder by warning him in advance about the coming of a flood, and how on their way to escape, they rescued two other animals and a man. It also tells how, eventually, the man viciously repaid the philanthropist. Parts of this story will also be offered in chapter three of this thesis.⁵⁶

⁵³ These quotations have been investigated in my article, ‘Notes on the *Chengju guangming dingyi jing*’, pp. 31-33.

⁵⁴ T.3. p. 37a.

⁵⁵ LDJJ, T. 3, pp. 15a-16a.

⁵⁶ There are at least two other stories in the *Jinglü yixiang* similar to the story about the great householder who bought the soft-shelled turtle and released it (JLYX, T. 53, p. 228b-c, quoted from a lost translation called *Anan xianbian jing* 阿難現變經, T. 53, pp. 142b-143a, and *Mo guowang jing* 摩國王經). This story is said to have become part of Chinese folklore found in different provinces. See Liu Shouhua, ‘Ren yu dongwu’, p. 32.

The didactic theme of this story is intended to show that Devadatta—who, like the turtle, was another character in the story—was ungrateful and maleficent to the Buddha from previous life times. The rescue and release of the soft-shelled turtle is the only part of the story that aims to convey the message of releasing animals. Nonetheless, it did have a salient effect on Chinese society. In fact, it did not take long for this story to start to be accepted by the Chinese as a typical example of turtle releasing stories that are found in the so-called ‘strange writings’ and other texts. At least two common Chinese stories of releasing turtles appeared not long after the text’s translation.

Of the two stories, one is found in the Gan Bao’s (干寶 fl. 317-320) *Soushen ji* (搜神記 ‘records of searching for spirits’), the other in a fifth century commentary on the *Shishuo xinyu* (世說新語 ‘new account of tales of the world’). Since both stories are similar in structure, to quote one of them will illustrate sufficiently the point that is being made:⁵⁷

Kong Yu (268-342), styled Jingkang, was from Shanyin of Kuaiji. In the reign of Emperor Yuan (276-322), he was appointed a marquis for his merit in cracking down on Hua Yi’s (fl. 311) rebellious force. When he was young, he once passed by the Pavilion of Yubu and saw a turtle caged and on sale by the roadside. He bought it and set it free in the Stream of Yubu. Having swum to the mid-stream, the turtle turned [its head] left backward [to Kong Yu] several times. Later, he was appointed for his merit as the Marquis of Yubu. When a seal was being made, its button that was shaped as a turtle turned left. This happened three times. The seal-smith told him of this, only then did Kong realize that it was the repayment of the turtle [to get him appointed]. He then collected it and wore it. He was repeatedly promoted, reaching the rank of Vice Director of State

⁵⁷ SSJ 20: 239. Also in the *Shishuo xinyu* 2A: 185. Cf. the translation of SSJ by Kenneth DeWoskin & J. I. Crump, Jr, *In Searcher of the Supernatural: the Written Record* (Stanford & California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 239. Kong Yu’s biography is included in the JS 77-78: 2051-67. For the event that he released a turtle, see pp. 2051-52. There are two versions of *Soushen ji*, the more genuine one is in twenty *juan*, which is use in this study. For a detailed discussion about the author and the texts of the *Soushen ji*, see, Derk Bodde ‘Some Chinese Tales of the Supernatural: Kan Bao and his Sou-shên chi’ (HJAS 6:3-4, 1942), pp. 338-357, and his ‘Again Some Tales of Supernatural: Further Remarks on Kan Bao and His Sou-shen chi’ (JAOS, 62:4, 1942), pp. 305-08. For the eight-fascicled version, see Wang Weihui, ‘Cong cihuishi kan bajuanben *Soushen ji* de yuyan shidai’, at <http://202.119.41.10/oldversion/wangweihuilunwen-cch.htm> visited on July 20, 2002.

Affairs Department. [A title of] General under the Imperial Guard was posthumously conferred on him.

孔愉，字敬康，會稽山陰人。元帝時以討華軼功封侯。愉少時，嘗行經⁵⁸餘不亭。見籠龜于路者，愉買之，放於餘不溪中。龜中流，左顧者數過。及後以功封餘不亭侯。鑄印而龜鈕左顧，三鑄如初。印工以聞，愉乃悟其為龜之報，遂取佩焉。累遷尚書左僕射，贈車騎將軍。

A similar story, which will be quoted in the next chapter, is also recorded in the *Jinshu*. Stories like this suggest that *fangsheng* activity has been practised by the Chinese since the latter part of Western Jin at the latest in Southern China where the *Liudu jijing* was translated.⁵⁹

It may be worth mentioning that no sources mention that monastics engaged in animal releasing activities during this time. Considering the fact that the Chinese were officially not allowed to be ordained into the Buddhist Samgha till the year 335 in northern China, although private ordination started by the end of the Han times, one could reason that the number of Chinese monastics was relatively small.⁶⁰ Even in the Eastern Jin, an anti-Buddhist Chinese wrote that people of the Western Jin were not so interested in Buddhism, all the *sramanas* ('monks') were *hu* (胡) people (those from western regions outside of China).⁶¹

Given the fact that the most inspiring text for releasing animals was translated in the early 3rd century, the practice of releasing turtles existed since Western Jin times, and that the popularity of the *Chengju guangming dingyi jing* together with Xi Chao's work in the Eastern Jin period rose, it

⁵⁸ In Wang's edition it is 經行, here a new suggestion is followed. See Wang Huabao, 'Soushen ji jiaokan zhaji' (*Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 2, 2000), p. 55.

⁵⁹ It may be interesting to note that this sort of stories has been heard all the time in China, and that even nowadays, the Chinese are still releasing turtles.

⁶⁰ GSZ, T. 50, p. 385c; JS 46: 1305. It has become common knowledge that the first Chinese Buddhist monk was Yan Fotiao (嚴佛調) of the last part of the second century (T. 50, p. 324c). Yu Jiaxi suggests that even ignoring the information about the Yan Fotiao being the first Chinese monk in GSZ it is highly likely that there were Chinese who became Buddhist monks near the end of the Han dynasty. See *Yu Jiaxi lunxue zazhu* (2 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 125-27. later than Yan Fotiao was a Chinese monk named Zhu Shixing (朱士行 fl.260-82), see CSZJJ, T. 55, pp. 42a, 47c; GSZ, T. 50, p. 346b.

⁶¹ HMJ, T. 52, p. 81b; GHMJ, T. 52, p. 126b. Liu Shufen, 'Cong minzushi de jiaodu kan taiwu miefo', *ZYLYYJ* 72: 1, 2001, p. 24;

is not difficult to imagine that the inclusion of the term *fangsheng* in the *Liezi* version of the dove-releasing custom was the result of Buddhist influence.⁶² Many Chinese scholars regard the *Liezi* as a forgery made under Buddhist influence, mainly because the dove releasing custom seems similar to the animal releasing tradition of Buddhism.⁶³ Bodde does not accept this view. Instead, he suggests that the dove releasing custom is an indigenous Chinese one since the Buddhist custom of releasing animals did not occur till the fifth century CE.⁶⁴ He seems to have reached an accurate conclusion but one based on an apparently false suggestion. After all, even when the custom was in its heyday, only a few persons' animal-releasing activities were recorded.

3. The Animal Releasing Custom in 5th and 6th Century China

3.1. More Texts Advocating Releasing Animals and More Practitioners

The fifth and sixth centuries saw an increase in the number of Buddhist translations and the development of the custom of releasing animals under the encouragement of officials and emperors. First, during the fifth century, the Vinaya texts of several major Buddhist schools were successively translated into Chinese. These texts confirm that the Buddha did not forget to tell his clerical disciples that observing disciplinary rules meant no hindrance whatsoever to the practice of releasing tied or troubled animals. The Buddha said that a monk is free of any fault for rescuing or liberating a trapped or endangered animal, as long as he does it with a heart of kindness or of sympathy. However, he would be charged with a small offence if he released an animal, particularly a domestic one or the one that has an owner, under any of these circumstances: mischief, with the intention of stealing, releasing an animal of one sex for the other sex, or if he was regretful after releasing.⁶⁵

Then, there appeared another important translation called the *Jin guangming jing* (金光明經 'sūtra of golden light'), translated by

⁶² *Liezi jishi* (shuofu) 8: 269.

⁶³ See the views dealt with in Bodde, 'Lieh-Tzū', p. 25.

⁶⁴ Bodde, 'Lieh-tzū', p. 26.

⁶⁵ WFL, T. 22, p. 183a; SSL T. 22, p. 381a, 430c; *Sapoduobu pini modeleiqie*, T. 23, p. 587c; *Shanjianlü piposha*, T. 24, p. 740a; SFL, T. 22, p. 974a.

Dharmakṣema in about 424.⁶⁶ In this sūtra, what deserves to be mentioned is a story that has a direct impact on the formation of the animal liberating ceremony. The relevant story is also a Jātaka, and describes the Buddha, in one of his previous lives, as an elderly man by the name of Running Water (流水長者), a physician endowed with loving-kindness and compassion. One day, he and his two sons were walking in an empty area and saw flocks of animals running towards a single direction. Out of curiosity he followed them and found a pond which was just going to dry up. In that pond all the fishes were struggling for water. The elder felt great pity for them. Then a tree god told him that he was called Running Water, because he could both run water and give water. At the suggestion of the tree god that he should bring some water to those fish, the elder went to the king and borrowed twenty elephants to fetch water from a long way. He also brought food to feed them and preached the Dharma to them. The story ends with all the fish being reborn into heaven and paying their visits, in the form of deities, to the elder.⁶⁷

The story of rescuing fish, pointed out by Sengyou as the first case of rescuing animals, not only provides a classical example of rescuing endangered living creatures, but also later inspired Chinese Buddhists in the invention of another practice relating to the releasing of animals and the ceremonial rituals of *fangsheng* activity. It shows its influence in the sixth century when the custom of releasing animals reached another important stage, which will be dealt with subsequently.

After the *Jin guangming jing*, we finally have the first Buddhist scripture that uses the term *fangsheng* to designate the activity of releasing animals and propagating the spiritual benefit of performing such activities. This sūtra is called the *Foshuo guanding bachu guozui shengsi dedu jing* (佛說灌頂拔除過罪生死得度經 T. 21, p. 532b-536b), and is the last

⁶⁶ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 11b.

⁶⁷ *Jin guangming jing*, T. 16, pp. 351c-353c. A copy of part of this text can be found in the Dunhuang collections and has been studied by Jao Tsong-yi, see his 'Le plus Ancien Manuscrit Daté (471) de la Collection Pelliot Chinois de Dunhuang P. 4506 (Une copie du *Jingguangming jing* 金光明經)' (*Journal Asiatique* 269, 1981), pp. 109-118. A slightly different version of the story can be seen in Yijing's translation *Jin guangming zuisheng wang jing* (金光明最勝王經, trsl. in 703), T. 16, p. 449a-c. The Sanskrit edition also has this story. See Nanjio Bunjiu & Idzumi Hokei ed., *The Suvānaprabhāsa Sūtra: A Mahayana Text Called 'The Golden Splendour'* (Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, 1931), pp. 168-185.

fascicle of the received *Guanding jing* (灌頂經‘consecration sūtra’). This sūtra is also problematic, but the date of its earliest circulation can be fixed in the year 435, when the text is reported to have appeared.⁶⁸

The sūtra, as its title suggests, is mainly about how to get rid of one’s own demerits, and helps one to escape from the life and death circle with the powers of the twelve vows of Baiṣajya-guru Buddha (the Buddha of Medical Master).⁶⁹ The Buddha advises the four clusters of his disciples (monks, nuns, and male and female lay followers) to light forty-nine oil lamps (seven storeys with seven lamps on each) and to release the animals, because the merits gained through such deeds can help those who have died but whose souls still suffer in their bodies to shake off their souls and get over their suffering; it also guarantees that the practitioner will not encounter calamities and disasters in this life and hereafter (拔彼精神令得度苦，今世後世不遭厄難).⁷⁰ In other words, lightening oil lamps and releasing living creatures are a means of atoning for sin and preventing misfortunes.

This text seems to be the first sūtra that instructs monastics to practise *fangsheng*. It may be worth pointing out that, around this time, there had been few monastics engaged in animal releasing activities. The first known case was a monk named Beidu (杯度) who is said to have been a monk from the Liu Song dynasty. He tended to release fish, although he did not avoid eating meat.⁷¹ A little bit later, a nun named Shi Sengshu (釋僧述 430-513) vigorously engaged in *fangsheng* activities. She is said to have been a vegetarian from the age of eight. From the time she was ordained at the age of nineteen till her death, she was admired by members of the royal family as well as by the masses of people for being diligent in practising meditation. She lived a very simple and rough life of a recluse and never retained more property than she needed. Rather, she spent her

⁶⁸ CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 91a. For a discussion of this text, see Appendix I.

⁶⁹ A similar idea is found in a translation text quoted in the *Jinglu yixiang*, T. 53, p. 119a.

⁷⁰ *Foshuo guanding jing*, T. 21, p. 536a. Three other translations also contain a similar idea, although they do not use the exact word *fangsheng*. See *Foshuo yaoshi rulai benyuan jing*, T. 14, p. 404a; *Yaoshi rulai benyuan gongde jing*, T. 14, p. 407c; *Yaoshi liuliguang qifo benyuan gongde jing*, T. 14, p. 415c.

⁷¹ T. 50, p. 391a; T. 53, p. 746c.

money on charity, *fangsheng*, and making statues.⁷² A little time later, the monk Shi Fazang (釋法藏) who was a contemporary and a fellow townsman of the notable monk Shi Tanfei (釋曇斐) (443-519), is also briefly recorded as having been well-known for strictly observing the Vinaya rules, being very active in the rescuing and releasing of animals as well as having made Buddhist statues.⁷³

The above two texts provide examples of *fangsheng* that may have been inspired by the composite *Fanwang jing*. This was the first Vinaya text, though apparently a forgery, that turns the *fangsheng* idea into a disciplinary rule for those who took the Bodhisattva ordination. The passage urging the observers of the Bodhisattva precepts to practise *fangsheng* is a passage describing one of the forty-eight minor precepts for a Bodhisattva. It stresses that a Bodhisattva should be compassionate.⁷⁴

Being a disciple of the Buddha, [one should] release animals out of being merciful-hearted...[thinking] all earth and water are my previous body, all the fire and wind my own body, thus one should constantly practise *fangsheng*, [wishing] in every lifetime obtained [one will practise] the permanent *dharma* and teach others to release living creatures. If [one] sees people killing animals, one should by any skilful means rescue and protect them, and take their sufferings and troubles away.

若佛子，以慈心故，行放生業……一切地水是我前身，一切火風是我本體，故常行放生。生生受生，常住之法，教人放生。若見世人殺畜生時，應方便救護，解其苦難。

Judging by the large number of copies of this text preserved in the Dunhuang Caves, and by the esteem the text had enjoyed since the introduction of the Bodhisattva ordination in the early fifth century, it is not difficult to understand why people always refer to this text as the earliest theoretical support for animal liberating practice in China, although, as we have demonstrated so far, this is far from the truth.⁷⁵

⁷² *Biqiuni zhuan*, T. 50, pp. 947b-947b. The authorship of this work has been questioned, see Cao Shibang, 'Biqiu Shi Baochang shifou *Biqiuni zhuan* zhuanren de yiwen' (Shi Hengqing ed., *Fojiao sixiang de chuancheng yu fazhan*, Taiwan: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1995), pp. 455-66.

⁷³ GSZ, T. 50, p. 382c.

⁷⁴ FWJ, T. 24, p. 1006b.

⁷⁵ Chinese Buddhists are customary to the belief that the animal releasing custom must be traced to this text. So do modern scholars. See Li Jinju 李金菊, 'Hanchuan fojiao yansheng de lishi yanjiu' 汉传佛教养生的历史研究, 中国中

Finally, the first part of the sixth century witnessed another interesting translation that emphasized the idea of *fangsheng*, to the extent that it even justified the use of force in persuading people to liberate animals. The translation is called *Zhengfa nianchu jing* (正法念處經 ‘sūtra of contemplations on the correct Dharma’) and was rendered into Chinese in 539 by Gautama Prajñārucci (i.e. Qutan Banruoliuzhi 瞿曇般若流支 fl.516-543) with the assistance of two Chinese monks, i.e. Tanlin (曇林) and Sengfang (僧昉).⁷⁶ To urge people to do *fangsheng* this text has this to say:⁷⁷

On seeing fishermen and hunters preparing enclosure and setting nets, placing fishing nets and blocking river streams, [one should] for the sake of living creatures let them live by breaking the fishing dam. Or if [one] has the authority and power, [one] should force [them] to release living creatures.

見漁獵者，張圍設網，置罟遮截，為利眾生，令其活命，破彼魚堰。或有勢力，逼令放生。

In another place, the text explains that *fangsheng* is a big meritorious deed to perform, and that practise of *fangsheng* means non-killing and a rebirth into the thirty-three Heavens.⁷⁸

It is quite obvious that *fangsheng* is greatly emphasized and encouraged by this text. Yet, not many monastics were recorded practising *fangsheng*, apart from the few who were well known and eminent enough to be included in the pages of Chinese Buddhist histories. Since vegetarian practice among the Buddhists during this time was prevalent, almost all of those who were recorded to have been engaged in the *fangsheng* activities were vegetarians. Among them, Shi Zhiyi, who will be treated separately below, was the most active. But before him, we are informed that a monk

医科学院博士学位论文 2007, especially, pp. 41-44; Joanna F. Handlin Smith, ‘Liberating Animals in Ming-Qing China: Buddhist Inspiration and Elite Imagination’ (*Journal of Asian Studies*, 58:1, Febu.1999), p. 51.

⁷⁶ LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 86c. Lin Li-kouang, following the preface to the text, held that it was translated between 542 and 543. See his *Introduction au Compendium de la Loi (Dharma-Samuccaya): L'aide-Memoire de la Vraie Loi (Saddharma-Smṛtyupasthāna-Sūtra)*, (Paris: Librairie D’Amérique et D’Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1949), pp. 147-48.

⁷⁷ ZFNCJ, T. 17, p. 109b.

⁷⁸ ZFNCJ, T. 17, p. 202c.

named Shi Sengruo (釋僧若 fl.509) also engaged in *fangsheng*.⁷⁹ The *Beiqi shu* and the *Beishi* tell us of a colourful lay Buddhist named Lu Fahe (陸法和 fl. 549-555), who seems to have also propagated *fangsheng*. Before he voluntarily offered his help to suppress Hou Jing's (侯景) rebellion in 549 CE, he lived a life of an austere monk in Jingzhou (荊州, in present-day Hunan province). Even in the military campaign, he performed miracles to stop people from harming animals. Once he even pointed out a particular place for 'liberating living creatures'.⁸⁰ This anecdote was elaborated in a thirteenth century Buddhist history as 'he built ponds for releasing fish wherever he went'.⁸¹ However, we are told that a stele inscription, the *Jingzhou fangsheng bei* (荊州放生碑 'stele [issued for] the releasing of animals in the Jing prefecture'), was composed by the second emperor of the Liang dynasty Xiao Yi (蕭繹 508-54).⁸² We neither have evidence linking this piece of writing to Lu's life nor can we be sure that the stele was erected at the place he pointed out, even though it is tempting to imagine that it might have been a text serving as moral support given to Lu by the court for his merit in quashing the rebellion.

Surprisingly before the Sui Dynasty, even a foreign master known as Narendrayaśas (那連提黎耶舍 ca.500-589) is also said to have diligently busied himself with the *fangsheng* activity.⁸³

It is difficult to explain why India at this time should have produced a sūtra such as *Zhengfa nianchu jing* that regards *fangsheng* as so important, but what the sūtra emphasizes may be a mirror of the *fangsheng* situation in this time of Chinese Buddhism. By the time the text was translated, some Chinese rulers and officials had already become involved in and

⁷⁹ XGSZ, T. 50, pp. 460c-463b.

⁸⁰ BQS 32: 247-231; BS 89: 2941-45. Lu's help for the Liang government is mentioned in a few other official histories of the Six Dynasties. See LS 1: 3, 4:107, 5:116, 128, 133, 6: 143, 45:626, 46: 640, 55: 826, 56: 857; CS 9: 154, 13:197, 31: 417; BQS 4: 59, 13: 176, 16: 210, 20: 280; *Fozu tongji*, T. 49, p. 351c, 357b, 407a. For a study of his life, see Miyakawa Hisayuki, 'Ryo, Hokusei no koji Riku Hōwa', in Bukkyō shigakkai, ed., *Bukkyō no rekishi to bunka* (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1980), pp. 143-156

⁸¹ *Fozu lidai tongzai*, T. 49, p. 553a. Also see *Shenseng zhuan*, T. 49, p. 553a.

⁸² QSGSDQHLCW vol. 3, p. 3057.

⁸³ XGSZ, T. 50, p. 432a; T. 55, p. 544b.

officially encouraged *fangsheng*. This point and the tremendous impact of this text will become clearer in the following paragraphs.

3.2. Official's Participation in the Releasing of Living Creatures

3.2.1. The Royal Family of the Xiao Clan and *fangsheng*

As far as we know from surviving documents, from the latter part of the fifth century animal-releasing activities took hold in the circle of official literati. The earliest official engagement in and encouragement of *fangsheng* activity was made by the Xiao clan of the Qi dynasty, led by one of the most active and vigorous lay Buddhist practitioners of the time, Xiao Ziliang.⁸⁴ While diligently listening to and practising the dharma, helping translate sūtras and in preaching himself, Xiao also wrote many works on Buddhism for didactic purposes,⁸⁵ one of which was an article on *fangsheng*. Unfortunately, the text seems to have been lost, though Sengyou's *Chu sanzang jiji* preserves its title, together with several of his other writings on various Buddhist topics.⁸⁶ Judging from its title, the *Shu*

⁸⁴ *Bianzheng lun*, T. 52, p. 504b; XGSZ, T. 50, p. 465c. He was so pious in Buddhism that he took the Bodhisattva precepts and truly practised the Dharma. He even suggested to the emperor in his second admonishment for the latter's bird-shooting game that the latter should consider upholding Buddhist precepts. See NQS 40: 699.

⁸⁵ The LDSBJ and the *Poxie lun* mention him helping others in translating sūtras (T. 49, p. 94b, 124b; T. 52, p. 483a). However, the author of the *Zhongjing mulu* enumerated twenty-three Buddhist sūtras which he helped in polishing and remarked that all those sūtras were damaged by Xiao. By listing out, he intended to remind later generations of 'such damage' (T. 55, p.127a-127b). This is partially confirmed by Sengyou, see CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 37c). According to one source, he also made a large number of copies of sūtras (T. 55, p. 37c; T. 49, p. 124b). For his other Buddhist activities, see Tang Yongtong, *Hanwei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, pp. 340-43.

⁸⁶ T. 55, p. 86a. From the CSZJJ one can tell the topics of his writings varied; they ranged from commentaries to apologetics, from prayers to hymns, from Buddhist history to manual for the laity. Like one of his contemporaries Lu Gao (陸杲 459-532), he is said to have also composed a work intended to promote the efficacy of Buddhist belief of cause and effect. The work, which shares the same name with Liu Yiqing's well-known one, the *Xuanyanji* 宣驗記, seems to have been lost, see *Mingbaoji*, T. 51, p. 788a. His essay on how to become a lay Buddhist was regarded by Shi Daoxuan to be the *Jingzhuzi* (淨住子 CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 93a), see *Sifenlü xingshichao zichiji* 四分律行事鈔資持記, T. 40, p. 232b. He also composed a hymn praising the Buddha's aura, see GSZ, T. 50, p. 418c; GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 211b-211c, pp. 233a-234a; *Sifenlü xingshichao zichiji*, T. 40, p.253a; *Datang neidian lu*, T. 55, p. 261c; *Zhongjing mulu*, T. 55, p. 207a; *Fozu tongji*, T.

fangsheng donggong zhai (述放生東宮齋 ‘account of the fast of releasing living creatures in the eastern palace’), it might have been an account of a *fangsheng* event that had taken place in the eastern palace. It can hardly be said that at that time there was already a specific place built particularly for releasing animals, but it is highly possible that this event may have taken place. For the ‘eastern palace’ was where a crown prince resided; and Xiao himself was indeed the crown prince of the Qi. In addition, both Buddhist sources and the standard history of the dynasty also indicate that Xiao widely associated with monks and nuns of high religious achievements and frequently invited well-versed monks to preach in his own house, and that he once even invited monks to chant in the front hall of the palace on an occasion when the emperor fell ill.⁸⁷ He was recorded to have held several large-scale banquets for *monastics* in his house. At such events, he took part by serving, which attracted criticisms from society, for that did not fit his social status. On two known occasions when natural disasters destroyed people’s homes, he opened his own granary and gave food and drinks to the needy. For those who lost their homes in the catastrophes, he built houses beside his own and invited them to stay (*Jinlou zi jiaoshi*, 3: 118). Thus, later authors praised him in gratitude to spread Buddhism in China, and even regarded him as a true ‘family-renouncer’.⁸⁸ As important as his other two works on Chinese Buddhist history, (a history of the Buddhist church and an apologetic work, both of which are now lost) this work is probably the earliest writing of Buddhist *fangsheng* activities known to us to be composed of by an official.

49, p. 347b. He is said to have been inspired suddenly by a dream in the second night of the second month of year 489 and created a chanting melody, which was very popular. Thus he was also likened to Cao Zhi in creating Buddhist chanting hymns, see GSZ, T. 50, p. 414b; *Fozu tongji*, T. 49, p. 347b. He himself sometimes even preached. Shen Yue wrote few essays on his preaching and commentaries, see GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 232b-233a.

⁸⁷ NQS 40: 700; *Fozu tongji*, T. 49, p. 347b. For his association with eminent monks and nuns, see GSZ, T. 50, p. 400b, *Biqiuni zhuan*, T. 50, p. 942b; T. 50, p. 945b. For his frequent and constant invitations of well-versed monks to preach, see CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 78a; GSZ, T. 50, p. 375c; GHMJ, T. 52, p. 269b; *Fozu tongji*, T. 49, p. 347b; FYZL, T. 53, p. 429b.

⁸⁸ XGSZ, T. 50, p. 465c; *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳, T. 51, p. 42c.

Although he was, as the *Nanqi shu* states, very benevolent, kind and honest, his charity deeds made the emperor suspect that he might have had political interests in doing all that. (T. 49, p. 347b; NQS 40: 700).

The fifth century short-story collection conveys the belief that *fangsheng* could also lengthen one's life. The story begins with Zhen Xianzhi (鄭鮮之 364-427), who was the Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs in the Liu Song dynasty. Zhen was a Buddhist devotee, who after dying suddenly in 427 while on duty, later was revived and passed his words onto others saying that his lifespan would have been much shorter had he not practised *fangsheng* and other Buddhist activities.⁸⁹ Though this story may not be true, it is in accordance with theories current during the author's time, for in the early part of the fifth century, there was already a scripture advocating the idea that merit accumulated through rescuing endangered animals could change an individual's karma and extend his lifespan.⁹⁰

3.2.2. The Emperor Wu's Promotion in the Release of Animals

Like Qi officials, in the Liang dynasty (502-556), the ruling class also widely engaged in *fangsheng* activities. Also from the Xiao family, the Marquis of Linru (臨汝侯 i.e. Xiao Yuanxian 蕭淵獻 d.533) asked a man from the gentry class who was named Xie Zheng (謝徵 500-536) to write him an article on *fangsheng*. The man's writing skill is said to have been so surprisingly good that his works, including this article, were highly praised by the literati of that time.⁹¹ Unfortunately, apart from its title, *Fangsheng wen* (放生文 'essay on releasing living creatures'), the article itself has not survived.

However, for a source showing the involvement and encouragement of the Liang court, we are fortunate in having an eyewitness account written by Xiao Zixian (蕭子顯 483-537), then the learned Rector of the Imperial Academy (國子祭酒) and the author of the *Nanqi shu* (南齊書 'book of southern Qi Dynasty'). The account, which is called *Yujiang jinzi mohe banruo boluomi jing xu* (御講金字摩訶般若波羅蜜經序 'preface to the emperor's preaching on the *Great Perfection Sūtra of the Golden Words*') is included in the *Guang hongming ji*, and tells us that Emperor Wu of the

⁸⁹ FYZL, T. 53, p.315b quotes from *Mingbao ji* (冥報記). Lu Xun suggests it was from the MXJ, since the present *Mingbao ji* in the Buddhist canon does not have this story. See *Lu Xun quanji* (20 vols., Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973), vol. 8, p. 520.

⁹⁰ See *Fenbie shan-e baoying jing* (分別善惡報應經), T. 1, p. 896c. This idea re-occurs in the *Zabaozang jing* (雜寶藏經), T. 4, p. 468c

⁹¹ LS 50: 718; it was recorded as Xie Wei 謝微 in the NS 19: 530; Cf. J.J. M. de Groot, 'Miséricorde envers les Animaux dans le Bouddhisme Chinois', p. 466.

Liang dynasty practised thirteen kinds of meritorious deeds, designated 'inexhaustible storages', *wujin zang* (無盡藏). Among the thirteen, two important deeds are specially noted: one is *fangsheng*, the other charity donation.⁹² The emperor donated materials to monasteries, offered food and housing to the devastated poor, and issued edicts prohibiting killing in the royal kitchen. Most of all, the emperor was so enthusiastic in promoting the teaching of non-killing that he undertook all sorts of edifying performances. To encourage people to do *fangsheng*, for instance, the emperor is said to have ridden a chariot with a banner on it, charging about in the capital to persuade people to liberate both domestic and wild animals. His kindness towards animals can be confirmed by one of his poems.⁹³ Such activities surpass the religious involvement of King Aśoka, whom Emperor Wu is said to have always strived to emulate.

It can hardly be denied that by this time animal releasing had become one of many major teachings of Buddhism which were practised by the Chinese Buddhists, although in Xiao Gang's (蕭綱 503-551, i.e. the crown prince) *Dafa song* (大法頌 'eulogy on the great teaching') presented to the emperor, it is listed among the many things that, according to him, are still earthly.⁹⁴ Again, Xiao Yi's work written for Lu Fahe, mentioned earlier, can also be taken as some form of encouragement in *fangsheng*.

This imperial encouragement of *fangsheng* seems to have taken place three times in North China. Prior to Emperor Wu's edict in the South, Emperor Xianwen of the Northern Wei (獻文帝 i.e. 拓跋弘 r. 466-471) had ordered his people not to harm worms and to release captured eagles.⁹⁵ His deed set an example for Emperor Xiaowu (孝武帝, i.e. 元修 r. 532-34) who before his official coronation issued an edict asking his people to release encaged birds into mountains and forests,⁹⁶ an act that was followed by the Buddhist Emperor Wenxuan who in 551 issued a similar edict.⁹⁷

⁹² T. 52, p. 237c. This preaching took place in 533, LS 3: 77. For the ministers' donation for 'buying' the emperor back, see the LS 3: 73.

⁹³ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 237c, 352c.

⁹⁴ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 240c.

⁹⁵ WS 114: 3038-39.

⁹⁶ WS 13: 328.

⁹⁷ XGSZ, T. 50, p. 485b.

3.3. The Construction of Fangsheng Ponds (放生池)

Fangshengchi, ‘pond for releasing living creatures’, is one of the main components of any mid-sized Chinese Buddhist temple. The incorporation of *fangshengchi* as part of Chinese Buddhist temples began in the early part of the Tang dynasty (唐朝 618-907), though it has roots in the sixth century. The Song dynasty author, Zhao Yanwei (趙彥衛 fl.1163) in his *Yunlu manchao* (雲麓漫抄, ‘Yunlu book notes’) quotes a passage from Liu Su’s (劉餗 fl. 742) *Zhuanji* (傳記 ‘biographies and records’) suggesting that Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty ordered some men to construct a pond for releasing aquatic creatures, which was also called *Changmingchi* (長命池 ‘pond of longevity’).⁹⁸ Indeed, given the enthusiasm shown by the emperor in preaching non-killing and in encouraging people to practise *fangsheng*, one can hardly doubt this evidence, although no surviving contemporary material supports it. Any reliable information on these ponds is not available until the Chen and Sui dynasties.

According to Shi Zhipan’s (釋志磐 1200-1275) work, the *Fozu tongji* (佛祖統紀 ‘chronicle of Buddhas and patriarchs’), the construction of such ponds was inspired by the aforementioned story of the Running Water elder who saved fish in a pond, and the person who started this tradition was Shi Zhiyi.⁹⁹ This is certainly true, for both Zhiyi’s biography, written by his immediate disciple Shi Guanding (釋灌頂 561-632) and the one compiled by Shi Daoxuan (釋道宣 596-667) do agree on this point.

Theoretically as the third, and institutionally the first, patriarch of the Tiantai School (天台宗) in Chinese Buddhism, Zhiyi was active in the Tiantai Mountains of Zhejiang province. Around the area where he lived, the locals built dams in the river to form fishing pools. Unable to bear to see them killing living creatures, Zhiyi saved his money for clothes and food, and persuaded others to join him to buy a pool close to his lodgings. He used it as a pond for releasing watery creatures, and is said to have preached the *Jingang banruo boluomi jing* (金剛般若波羅蜜經 i.e. the well-known and popular *Diamond Sūtra*) and the *Jinguangming jing* to the fish released into the pond.

⁹⁸ *Yunlu manchao*, 3: 3a.

⁹⁹ T. 49, 322c.

With his sincere actions and warm preaching and propagation, the people of the neighbouring areas eventually gave up fishing and some hundred noblemen of the gentry class donated their river dams to him. Soon, sixty-three such river pools were converted to *fangsheng* ponds. His disciple Shi Huiba (釋慧拔 fl. 578) composed a memorandum to the imperial court telling Emperor Xuan of the Chen dynasty (陳宣帝 530-582) about his teacher's deeds. The emperor, in reply, issued an edict saying that those river pools were to be kept as ponds for releasing animals for as long as they existed. Soon after that, the court also ordered the rector of the Imperial Academy Xu Xiaoke (徐孝克 527-599) to write a long article entitled 'Tiantaishan Xiuchansi Zhiyi chanshi fangsheng beiwen' (天台山修禪寺智顗禪師放生碑文 'stele inscriptions of releasing living creatures in honour of the Chan master Zhiyi of the practising Chan temple of Mount Tiantai'). It was immediately engraved on a stone slab which was erected in the Temple of Practising Chan.¹⁰⁰

Without any doubt, Zhiyi's activities were inspired by the *Jin guangming jing*, particularly the preaching activity which is still preserved in the present-day *fangsheng* ceremony. Still, it may also be likely that his buying the dams to create living-creature releasing ponds reflects the influence of the teaching in the *Zhengfa nianchu jing* which was discussed previously.

4. Conclusion

Out of loving kindness and compassion towards all sentient beings, the Buddha laid down the non-killing precept for his followers. With the heightened concern for animal beings, the Indian Buddhists were recorded in the Buddhist scriptures to have practised rescuing and releasing of animals. This is what the Chinese Buddhists called *fangsheng*, a custom that started to develop gradually in the Chinese Buddhist tradition roughly in the last part of the third century CE. As Zhiyi clearly states, non-killing as a monastic rule is a good deed displayed by observing the rule, while *fangsheng* is a free choice of good.¹⁰¹ In a broader sense, non-killing is just one indirect way of releasing animals—preserving living beings by sparing their lives; and *fangsheng* is a step beyond non-killing.

¹⁰⁰ *Sui Tiantai Zhizhe dashi biezhuan*, T. 50, pp. 193b-c; XGSZ, T. 50, p. 567c, 582b. The article is included in the second fascicle of the *Guoqing bailu*, T. 46, pp. 801c-802c.

¹⁰¹ *Jin guangming jing wenju*, T. 39, p. 55a.

The early stage of animal releasing activity in Buddhist China seems to have followed closely the patterns of Indian Buddhist sources—those who did animal releasing were lay people, and the animals they set free were turtles, even though the releasing of animals out of kindness was not new to the early Chinese. With the Buddhist religion starting to infiltrate fully into the various strata of society, more and more officials and members of the royal families of the successive dynasties took an interest in practising *fangsheng*. Emperors who were Buddhist also promoted the activity by issuing edicts ordering people to release animals. Their encouragement and support through participation and various forms of propagation certainly contributed to the fact that *fangsheng* became an important feature of the fifth century Chinese Buddhism. The sixth century saw the appearance of *fangshengchi*, which directly inspired the construction of *fangsheng* ponds and the development of the ceremonial procedure of releasing animals in Buddhist temples. These practices continue down into the modern era.

Because of the interweaving of the teaching of karma with the theory of cause and effect and its integration into every aspect of Buddhist teachings, *fangsheng* stories are always marked with karmic rewards or the repayment of the rescued and released animal. This concept will be the prime consideration of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANIMALS IN CHINESE MORAL BELIEFS

So far we have discussed three major and direct ways of showing loving-kindness and compassion towards animal beings. This chapter is devoted to examining the moral belief that embodied in a cosmic law which both promises benefits for caring for animals and warns of the dangers of harming them. This moral belief is generally known as *yinguo baoying* (因果報應 ‘cause-effect and retributational-response’), often shortened as either *yinguo* or *baoying*. It basically holds that good or bad deeds are rewarded or punished respectively by some force that is beyond anybody’s power. The idea of *baoying* exists in both Chinese and Indian Buddhist cultures, and is used in both cultures as a vehicle for promoting and maintaining morality. Yet, apart from this functional similarity, *baoying* in these two cultures differs in detail. Our starting point is an introduction to the Chinese and Buddhist moral beliefs which may help us to understand more easily the processes of the absorption and popularisation of the latter in Chinese culture. This will be followed by examples of some stories which were designed to fulfil the operation of the law of *baoying* as it related to caring for or harming animals.

1. The Features of the Early Chinese Ethical System¹

Long before the introduction of Buddhism, China had been a country of cultural complexity due mainly to the diverse nature of its ethnicity. Therefore, when talking about a belief system, it is almost impossible, both in theory and in practice, to point out a single belief as a representation of all peoples living in China. Yet, as far as the source materials are concerned, there seems to have been some beliefs that were more dominant and noticeable than others. The pure reason for their dominance and noticeability was that they were better documented. The

¹ For a thorough investigation into Chinese ideas of fates and human nature presented in texts from ancient time up to the Han dynasty, see Mori Mikisaburo, *Jōko yori kandai ni itaru seimeikan no tenkai*, Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1971.

documentations almost exclusively exist in the language of the Han Chinese, thus the paragraphs that follow can only survey the beliefs which are conveyed through the writings in the Chinese language. This inevitably limits our objective to the mainstream literate Chinese culture. Even within this limitation, another point still needs to be made clear, and that is that what is going to be summarised is only something relevant to the nature of the Buddhist moral system. Accordingly, this summary by no means denies that there were not other types of beliefs that existed or were even popular outside the documentations of the literate Chinese.

In the pre-Han texts, the most reoccurring element of the early Chinese ethical system seems to have been the concept of *tianming* (天命, 'Heaven's mandate' or 'Heaven's decree'). *Tian* (天 Heaven) was a supreme being originally labelled as *di* (帝, 'supreme being') or *shangdi* (上帝, 'lord on high') by the people of the Shang. When the Zhou people overthrew the Shang rule, the Supreme Being was called *tian*.² Both Shang and Zhou people believed that Heaven determined all things on earth: from wars to the change of rulers, from harvest to house building, and from appointing officials to people's health.³ Heaven makes its decision

² K. C. Chang, *Early Chinese civilization: Anthropological Perspectives* (Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 155. This view has been re-examined by Robert Eno who suggests that before the end of the Shang *di* hardly meant the Supreme Being. See his 'Was There a High God Ti in Shang Religion?' (*Early China* 15, 1990), pp. 1-26. The change from *di* to *tian* is said to have happened at the end of the Shang and the beginning of the Zhou dynasty. See Jin Shenghua, 'Yinyang wuxingshuo yu Zhongguo gudai tianmingguan de yanbian: jianlun yinyang wuxingshuo dui yixue fazhan de yingxiang' (*Yijing yanjiu* 3, 1999), p. 39; and Zhu Ding, 'Cong shangdi dao tianming de xinyang bianqian' (*Chongqing shiyuan xuebao* 1, 2002), pp. 30-31. Another opinion is that the change took place in the Zhou dynasty and that Zhou people mixed Shang people's *di* with their own *tian* and produced a 'supreme being' believed to control the world and answer their requests made through sacrifices. In the meantime, the Zhou people also doubted both *di* and *tian* by questioning why the decree of Heaven was not permanent. See Du Yong, 'Luelun Zhouren de tianming sixiang' (*Kongzi yanjiu* 2, 1998), pp. 82-92.

³ Yang Hanqing, 'Guanyu dao ren liangge guannian yuanyuan de kaocha' (*Shehui kexue yanjiu* 5, 1997), p. 65. King Wu of the Zhou is said to have ascribed his sickness being cursed by Heaven. See *Shangshu yizhu*, p. 255. This study uses the so-called *jinwen* (今文, 'new text') version of the *Shangshu*, which was made known in the early Han (SJ 121: 3124). The sections of the *Shangshu* are believed to have been written in different periods and completed by no later than the unification of the Qin. Archaeological finds have confirmed most of its records to

based on man's good or bad behaviour. Sometimes Heaven is also depicted as the authority that guards justice. A story in the *Zuozhuan* shows how Heaven was believed to be able to help people to reclaim justice. One night, the Duke of Jin (晉侯, fl. 581) dreamed of a horrific ghost who told him that because Jin had unjustly killed his grandson, the ghost reported on him to Heaven.⁴ Another story tells of a drought which was believed to be a punishment from Heaven for the unjust execution of a certain filial daughter-in-law. The drought did not stop till justice was properly served.⁵

The authority of this totally controlling Heaven was called *tianming*. Scholars agree that as a belief it originated in the Shang dynasty.⁶ Up to the time when Buddhism was practised in China, in the first half of the first century CE,⁷ the early Chinese moral system was not a systematized theory; rather, it was a cluster of beliefs related directly or indirectly to the concept of *tianming*. The beliefs surrounding this concept can be tentatively and roughly divided into two seemingly opposite types, moralism and predetermined fatalism. The sections that follow give an overview of these two forms of *tianming*. In doing so, it is hoped that the background can be briefly provided for the acceptance of Buddhist moral beliefs.

1.1. Moral Beliefs

The moralistic side of *tianming* is represented by its ultimate power to reward or to punish according to human morality. This is *tianming*'s major significance, but before this understanding of morality developed into a

be historically true. For dating of its sections, see the comments on each section in the *Shangshu yizhu*. For a study of the debates over the 'new' and 'old' versions of the text in the Han times, see Michael Nylan, 'The Chin wen/Ku wen Controversy in Han Times' (TP, LXXX, 1994), pp. 83-145.

⁴ CQZZ, chenggong10: 849. A similar type of stories can also be found in later texts. For instance, see HHS 10B: 448; SSJ 10: 124-25; SSHJ (yiwen) 79-82.

⁵ SYSZ (guide) 5: 122.

⁶ Chen Ning, however, believes that it started in the Zhou. See his 'The Genesis of the Concept of Blind Fate in Ancient China' (*Journal of Chinese Religions*, 25, 1997), pp. 152-54.

⁷ For a survey of the materials indicating the earliest appearance of Buddhism in China, see the first two chapters of Tang Yongtong's *Hanwei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, pp. 3-24, and the second chapter of E. Zürcher's *Buddhist Conquest of China: the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (2 vols., Leiden: E. Brill, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 18-43.

general principle, the concept of *tianming* was applied mainly in the political sphere. *Tianming* was considered to be revealed through the manifestations of omens.⁸ Auspicious signs or bad omens respectively meant the coming of the reward or punishment of Heaven. Thus, histories

⁸ Omens include celestial phenomena such as the portents on the sky, meteors, comets, eclipses, and strange upturning on earth. All these were called *fuying* (符應, 'omen responses') or *ruiying* (瑞應 'auspicious responses'), see Liu Liwen, 'Lun Zuozhuan tiande heyi de tianmingguan: Zuozhuan yuyan de benzhi' (*Qiushi xuekan* 5, 2000), pp. 99-106. The observation of these signs was diligently made because in the mind of the ruling class they were the will of Heaven foreseeing or forewarning future events. The earliest literary evidence for this belief occurred in the Western Zhou period. According to a passage of the *Yijing*, S. J. Marshall has worked out that there was a solar eclipse shortly before the collapse of the Shang dynasty, which King Wu may have taken as an auspicious omen signifying the transfer of the Mandate of Heaven to the Zhou. See his, *The Mandate of Heaven*, p. 35. Again, the *Yijing* was quoted by a Han author to have contained this sentence 'Heaven manifests signs and displays auspicious or inauspicious [appearances]' (天垂象, 見吉凶, HHS 30B: 1061. Cf. LSCQJS (yingtong) 13: 677. It developed in the Chunqiu period in which the traditional cracking divination method was used to decipher any strange omens. This led to the development of *chenwei* (讖緯 'prophecy') techniques in various states of the Warring States period. *Chen* normally was accepted in dreams of the ruler. For instance, both the duke of Qin and Zhao Jianzi slept seven days and seven nights receiving decrees of Heaven. The interpretation of *chen* was prophecy. Even Confucius was said to have left a prophecy before he died to predicate Qin's rise. See LH (shizhi)26: 397. It was very popular by the end of the Warring States period and was fond of by Emperors of Qin and Han. Fascicle six and seven of the *Soushen ji* contain several cases attested with the *Yizhuan* (易傳) of the Yi Master of Han, Jing Fang (京房 77-37 BCE). This practice of prophecy was also the major way for successive peasant rebels notably led by Cheng Sheng of the Qin and Zhang Lu of the Later Han. All these were inherited in the form of occupying a section in the standard histories of the successive dynasties since the *Hanshu*. The extreme popularity of the belief in omens and *chenwei* in the Han owed much to Dong Zhongshu who for the first time systematised *chenwei* and *tianming* in association with the theory of *wuxing* (see *Bowu zhi jiaozheng*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, 9: 105). The belief was absorbed later into the *Taiping jing* in which one passage says that Heaven and Earth do not speak to man but from time to time make a sage or a sagely teacher appear in the world to convey what they have to say (TPJHJ 116: 651). For a comprehensive collection of literary sources on and a brief analysis of this belief, see Chen Pan, 'Qinhan jian zhi suowei fuying lunlüe' (ZYLYYJ, 16, 1947), pp. 1-67. For a general study on the practice of prophecy in the Han, see Sun Jiazhou, 'Handai yingyan chenyan lishi' (*Zhongguo zhhexueshi*, 2, 1997), pp. 82-88, 128. For a brief and general study on omens with related to politics in Han, see Wu Qing, 'Zaiyi yu Handai shehui' (*Xibei daxue xuebao*, 3, 1995), pp. 39-45.

frequently recorded that a bad regime was always overthrown in the legitimate name of carrying out *tianming*.⁹ The theory behind the appearance of omens is that they occur according to the quality of the

⁹ Herrlee Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China vol. I: The Western Chou Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 84-85; Zhou Guidian, 'Tianminglun yu Zhongguo gudai zhixue' (*Dongnan daxue xuebao*) 3, 2001, p. 14. As Wang Chong in his *Lunheng* pointed out, the connection between the belief of *tianming* and the political power belonged to the Confucian tradition (LH (huiguo)19: 302). This attribution can be confirmed by the *Lunyu* which states that from King Yao (堯) to King Yu (禹) in every transit of the ruling house the last ruler always said to the first ruler, 'Heaven's decree relies on your virtue and righteousness so that its decree can last long' (LYZY, ZZJC vol.1, yaoyue 23: 412). Other evidence for this connection is plenty. A passage in the *Shangshu* describes how the first ruler of the Shang was about to take over the Xia (*Shangshu yizhu*, p. 75). To this event, a poem in the *Shijing* also alludes (SJZJ [xuanniao-shangsong], p. 527). Quoting from the *Shangshu*, the *Mozi* recounts: '[Zhou 紂, i.e. the last ruler of the Xia dynasty] sits with his legs sprawled out and refuses to serve the Lord on High. He neglects the spirits of former kings and fails to sacrifice to them. And yet he insists, "I have the Mandate of Heaven!" He gives himself up to tyranny, and Heaven therefore casts him away and will not protect him' (Burton Watson trsl., *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, p. 91). And then there was the Zhou taking over the Shang. King Wu of the Zhou made such a war proclamation: 'the king has spoken to you thus: you, Yin's remaining officers! The merciless and severe Heaven has greatly sent down destruction on the Yin. We Zhou (周) have assisted the decree, and taking Heaven's bright majesty we carry out the royal punishment and rightly disposed the mandate of Yin: it was terminated by God...' (Karlgrén, Bernard, trans. "the Book of Documents" (*Bulletin of The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, No. 22, Stockholm, 1950), pp. 55-56. For Chinese passages, see *Shangshu yizhu*, pp. 78, 112.). The inscription on the cauldron buried (in about 310 BCE) with the king of a kingdom named of Zhongshan (中山) flourished in the middle of the Warring States period says in almost exactly the same way as what was said by King Zhou. See Hebeisheng wenwu guanlichu, 'Hebeisheng Pingshanxian Zhanguo shiqi Zhongshanguo muzang fajue jianbao' (*Wenwu* 1, 1979), pp. 10, 25. This belief in heavenly mandate continued to be used in later dynasties in which the dynastic histories always credit the birth of the emperors with descriptions of miracles indicating they were sent by Heaven. The followers of institutional Daoism believe that their duty is to help the ruler of the country to uphold *tianming*. See *Laojun yingsong jiejing* 1b, *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe* 1a; Zeng Dahui, 'Kou Qianzhi de jiangshen ji zhengzhi yitu' (*Qinghua xuebao* 28: 4, 1998), pp. 446-47. For study of omens recorded in the history books of the Han, Three Kingdom and the Six Dynasties, see TiZiana Lippiello, *Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China: Han, Three Kingdom and Six Dynasties* (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XXXIX), Nettetal 2001.

governance, which is mainly an expression of the moral quality of the ruler.¹⁰ A righteous ruler would normally take responsibility for the wrongdoings of his subjects.¹¹ Since Heaven issued its mandates according to the ruler's personal morality, correcting his moral behaviour became the only way to avoid punishment and to earn rewards. This is clearly shown in a conversation recorded between Confucius and Duke Ai (哀公, d. 467). Once, Duke Ai asked Confucius if the survival and perishing of a regime depended on human power and was not solely the working out of *tianming*. Confucius answered 'survival or perishing as disasters or blessings are all [down to] oneself. Even calamities from Heaven and daemons from earth cannot inflict them' (存亡禍福, 皆己而已, 天災地妖, 不能加也). To prove his point, Confucius picked two examples: one was an inauspicious sign for the emperor of Yin (殷帝) who was morally bad and led his country to a disastrous end, the other a bad omen for King Wuding (武丁 d. 1189 BCE) who, upon noticing the omen, immediately corrected his behaviour and brought his country peace and prosperity.¹² This cause-effect aspect of *tianming* may have been what was meant by a

¹⁰ MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4) mingguiC 8: 149.

¹¹ Both King Tang of the Shang and King Wu of the Zhou took responsibilities on behalf of their subjects. See LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) yaoyue 23: 412-13; GY *zhouyu* A: 35; MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4) jian-aiC 4: 77; LSCQJS (shunmin) 9: 479. According to the *Lüshi chunqiu*, King Wen of the Zhou did the same and Duke Jing of the Song refused to shift the heavenly punishment onto his subjects (LSCQJS zhilei 6: 347-48). With regard to this belief, Sarah Allan notes 'the first evidence of king as a ruler with moral responsibilities sanctioned divine authority occurs in the Western Zhou chapter of the *Shangshu*'. 'The king was a man who symbolized all men, and he strove through the vast apparatus of oracle bone divination to determine the needs of the spirits and avoid their curses being sent upon himself and his people...King Tang of the Shang 'acknowledges that all wrongdoing is known to the High Lord and takes responsibility for all wrongdoing in the "ten thousand regions" upon his own person while praying that his own wrongdoing should not be blamed upon the people'. See Allan, 'Drought, Human Sacrifice', pp. 52 8-30. In the same way, the ruler was the one who took credit for the country's prosperity because the *Shangshu* also says 'that if the one person is blessed, all commoners can depend on him (一人有慶, 兆民賴之)'. See *Shangshu yizhu* (Lüxing), p. 270. Another example was Liu Xiu's taking over the power. See HHS (biao) 3158.

¹² KZJYSZ (wuyi), p. 36; also quoted in SYSZ (jingshen) 10: 278-79. For a similar story and idea, see *Hanshi waizhuan jishi*, 3:2/81; 3:3/82, 3:17/ 99.

sentence from the *Laozi* which says, ‘misfortunes are what fortunes lean on; fortunes are where misfortunes hide’ (禍兮福之所倚，福兮禍之所伏).¹³

From this politically based understanding, *tianming*’s wider application in a more general context probably came in the Zhou dynasty,¹⁴ as shown in a number of common sayings in a few other ancient texts. In the *Shangshu* the first rulers of both Shang and Zhou said to the last rulers of their preceding dynasties that, ‘the way of Heaven is to bless the good and punish the evil with calamities (天道福善禍淫)’.¹⁵ Similarly the *Zuozhuan*, quoting from a text called *Zhoushu* (周書 ‘book of the Zhou’), also says, ‘Great Heaven has no partial affection. It protects only the virtuous (皇天無親，唯德是輔)’.¹⁶ The same idea is also conveyed in the *Guoyu* (國語 ‘conversations of the states’), which quoted from an ancient text entitled *Tangshi* (湯誓 ‘oath of Tang’), and the *Hanfeizi* (韓非子).¹⁷ Confucius is recorded to have quoted from the *Classic of Poems* that ‘Great is the Lord on High, its decree is never mistaken. To humans, Heaven certainly rewards the virtuous ones (皇上帝，其命不忒，天之于人，必報有德)’.¹⁸ Again, the *Laozi* and a few other texts quote an ancient saying which goes, ‘Heaven’s principle is that it has no partial affection but always rewards good people (天道無親，常與善人)’.¹⁹ One

¹³ LZJS 7: 235. Cf. LSCQS (zhile) 6: 347. From the viewpoint of philosophy, this sentence may indicate the relativity between the two opposite things.

¹⁴ Chen Ning believes that before the Zhou there was no such a concept as fate. See his ‘The Genesis of the Concept of Blind Fate’, pp. 143, 152.

¹⁵ *Shangshu yizhu*, pp. 26, 108, 169, 223. A similar remark is seen in the CQZZ (chenggong 5: 821; xianggong 28: 1149).

¹⁶ CQZZ, xigong 5: 309. This phrase was rephrased in a Han Buddhist translation as ‘the Buddha tells the great king, “the Dharma of the Way has no relatives, it only protects the good” (佛告大王：道法無親，唯善是輔)’, *Zhong benqi jing*, T.4, p. 153a.

¹⁷ GY zhouyu A: 35; *Hanfei zi jijie* 8: 483. Liu Xiang (劉向 77-6 BCE) repeats this idea in one of his works (SYSZ jinshen 10: 277).

¹⁸ SYSZ (quanmou) 13: 349. A similar idea is in the *Zuozhuan* which says ‘Heaven blesses the sagely virtuous’ 天祚明德 (CQZZ xuangong 3: 671).

¹⁹ The *Laozi* also has a sentence describing the unavoidability of the heavenly punishment: ‘The heavenly net is vast, sparse, but leaves out nothing (天網恢恢，疏而不失)’, LZJS 73, pp. 288, 306. ‘天道無親，常與善人’ was also quoted in Liu Xiang’s *Shuoyuan* from an inscription on a golden statue, which Confucius was said to have read (SYSZ jingshen 10: 293). This information can also be found in KZJYSZ (guanzhou), p. 73. The sentence was quoted by Lang Yi (郎顗 fl. 133) from the *Yijing* (HHS 30B: 1060). The idea that Heaven always protects morally

noticeable example of Heaven rewarding the good is the story of the Duke Jing of the Song State. He is said to have willingly taken punishment on seeing some inauspicious signs which were explained as an indication of the coming of Heaven's punishment. Three times did he refuse his minister's suggestions and with rectitude. In the end, he was told that he would not only escape from the disaster but also get extra years to live for his exceptional virtue.²⁰

Plenty of sources show that this heavenly law of rewarding the good and punishing the bad continued to be believed by the Chinese in the Han times, by which time it was called *baoying*.²¹ In Jia Yi's (賈宜 200-168

good people can also be found in the *Shangshu* (see *Shangshu yizhu*, 116) and the earliest commentary on the *Zhouyi* (see Xu Zhirui annt., *Zhouyi dazhuan jinzh*, Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1986, p. 54). Western scholars generally hold that the composition of the *Zhouyi* cannot be dated before the reign of King Mu (穆王 the fourth king after King Wu 武王, 1001-947 BCE according to traditional chronology) on the grounds that the term *tianzi* (天子, 'son of heaven') was first used to designate king started in this time (See Edward L. Shaughness, *The Composition of the Zhouyi*, PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1983, [University Microfilms International] p. 39). The evidence used in this argument however, has been overturned by another scholar. See Herrlee Glessner Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China Vol. I*, p. 495, n. 5. S.J. Marshall, who has shown that the *Yijing* contain lots of valuable historical records of the Shang and the beginning of the Western Zhou, suggests that the work may have been first compiled in the eleventh century BCE. See his *The Mandate of Heaven*, p. 151. This date is supported by two recent studies in China, which suggest that it was written by one of King Wu's four principal ministers, Nangong Kuo 南宮括. See Xie Baosheng, 'Zhouyi yuanzhu jingshen zhenxiang dabai' (*Zhouyi yanjiu*, 2, 1993), pp. 1-12; Ren Junhua, 'Mawangdui boshu Zhouyi gongzi jiemi: Nangong Kuo zuo Zhouyi xinzheng' (*Xuchang shizhuan xuebao*, 1, 1996), pp. 30-32.

²⁰ LSCQS (zhile) 6: 347-48.

²¹ HS 10: 305, 23: 1089. A study shows that the term *bao* (報) originally means sacrifices, particularly human sacrifices, in the Shang and early Zhou. See Zhu Diguang, 'Shanggu zongjiao huodong yu "bao"zi ciyi de yanbian' (*Hengyang shizhuan xuebao* 2, 1995), p. 90, pp. 89-91. In the *Shuowen jiezi*, *bao* is defined 'to be offenders' (當罪人, SWJZ 10B: 215a) which may be the original meaning of the term if we believe that in ancient China *dang zuiren* meant to be sacrificed. From this original meaning derived the meaning of 'to requite or repay', which perhaps explains that Heaven or even spirits receiving the sacrifices would translate their gratitude into worldly benefit for he who sacrificed. This meaning is used in the *Liji*, see LJJ (jiaotesheng) 25: 695. In the course of time, the term *bao* was applied in various social activities and different situations thereby gained

BCE) *Xinshu* (新序 ‘new order’), there is a story vividly illustrating how Heaven rewards the good.²² The *Huainan zi* even provides two stories showing that Heaven protects the good even if sometimes the results appear unlucky or bad.²³ Furthermore, Emperor Jing (景帝 i.e. Liu Qi 劉啟 r. 156-141 BCE) officially declared in an edict that ‘those doing good things would be rewarded with blessings by Heaven, while those doing bad, Heaven would be punished with disasters (為善者，天報以福；為非者，天報以殃).’²⁴ This belief was repeated by Dong Zhongshu whose theory of *tianren heyi* (天人合一 ‘union of Heaven and man’) was actually

many other meanings such as ‘to have retribution, to avenge, and to respond’. For a general study of the multiple meanings of the word, see Lien-sheng Yang, ‘The Concept of Pao as a Basis for Social Relations in China’, in John K. Fairbank ed. *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1959, 2nd print of 1957), pp. 291-995. For the notion of *bao* in the *Zuozhuan*, see David Schaberg’s *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, distributed Harvard University Press, 2001.

²² When Sunshu Ao (孫叔敖 fl. 598 BCE) was very young, one day when he went out, he saw a two-headed snake. According to a belief of the time, such an encounter normally led to the death of the seer. So he killed the snake and came home crying. After knowing what had happened, his mother asked where the snake was, Sun replied that he killed it in case somebody else saw it. Thus his mother said, ‘you won’t die, Heaven rewards one who has hidden merit, and merit over passes the inauspiciousness, kindness eliminates all calamities’. XXXZ zash1:4. This story is also included in Liu Xiang’s *Lienü zhuan* (烈女傳 SBBY 3/3a). It is also referred to in Donald E. Gjerstson’s ‘The Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tale’ (JAOS, 101:3, 1981), p. 289.

²³ Both in HNHL renjianxun 18: 595-99. The first story tells of a family which for three generations had been doing good things. One day their black cow gave birth to a white calf. Out of curiosity, they went to ask a diviner from whom they got the answer of ‘good omen’ and that they should sacrifice to gods (in the LH fuxu 6: 86-7, it was Confucius who was consulted). A year later, the father became blind for no reason. Like before, the diviner said that it was good too and advised them to make another sacrifice. Still a year later, the son became blind. Soon after that, another country invaded, but this family because of the father and son’s blindness escaped from army recruitment and survived the war. As soon as the war had ended, both the father and son regained their eyesight. The second story is also about a family.

²⁴ SJ 106: 2833. Except one graph missing, this saying also occurs in the *Shuoyuan* (zayan), which perhaps was quoted from the XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2, youzuo 20: 345).

the first systematized version of this *baoying* belief.²⁵ Some years later, this belief reappeared in a governmental document. In the records of a seminar held in 81 BCE in the central government of Han, while discussing disasters (*lunzai* 論災), the politicians asked about the causes of strange things and about one's lifespan, the efficacy of ghost, spirits etc. Some answered that they were due to people and to Heaven: if people did good things, then there would be auspicious portents, if doing bad, there would be inauspicious omens followed by bad or even tragic happenings.²⁶ Later on, a higher official named Huan Tan (桓譚, ca. 23BCE-56CE) developed this belief further by saying that Heaven rewards with the five blessings: longevity, wealth, nobility, happiness and numerous descendants.²⁷ In another case, Heaven's reward is said to result from its being touched by extremely kind deeds performed by humans, particularly those who are extremely filial and pious to their parents.²⁸

Alongside the belief of *baoying*, another moral belief exists that can be considered its supplement. That belief is called *chengfu* (承負, 'inherited burden') which holds that people can inherit spiritual merits and demerits from their parents or ancestors. The reason for considering it as a supplement to *baoying* is that it works according to the same principle of rewarding the good and punishing the bad.

Like the belief in *baoying*, the belief later identified as *chengfu* appeared much earlier than the term itself. By going back to religious materials found in pre-Qin and Han tombs, scholars are able to find that the origin of *chengfu* can be traced back to the *Yijing*, and that its drastic change and development took place in the *Chunqiu* period, when the idea of *sanming* (三命 'three-fold fate') was formulated.²⁹ Scholars further

²⁵ *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, 16: 442. For studies on the authenticity of the text, see G. Arbuckle's 'A Note on the Authenticity of the Chunqiu fanlu 春秋繁露: The Date of Chunqiu Fanlu chapter 73 "Shan Chuan song 山川頌" ("Praise-ode to Mountains and Rivers")' (TP LXXV 1989), pp. 227-234, esp. its footnotes.

²⁶ *Yantie lun jiaozhu*, lunzhai 54: 381-387.

²⁷ XL 8a, SBCK. The same 'wufu' occurs in the *Shangshu* as one of the nine ways to rule a country transmitted from Heaven to Yu the Great (*Shangshu yizhu*, pp. 118, 129).

²⁸ See stories in the SSJ 1: 14, 11: 134-35, 137, 138.

²⁹ Similar to Tang Yongtong's view that Chengfu was an imitation of Buddhist karma, Barbara Hendrischke holds that the concept of *chengfu* could be a Daoist reaction to the Buddhist concept of karma. See Tang Yongtong *Hanwei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, p. 108; Barbara Hendrischke, 'The Concept of Inherited

suggest that the concept of *chongfu* (重復 ‘repeat’) indicated in the Eastern Han tomb inscriptions is an alternative term to *chengfu*. So when the inscriptions say ‘deleting all the *chongfu*’ and that ‘the dead and the living cannot be related again’, they mean what the *Taiping jing* says, ‘eradicating the blame of *chengfu*’.³⁰ In terms of literary sources, the belief in *chengfu* can only be dated to the time of the *Zuozhuan* which includes the remark, ‘of the sagely wise men, if they do not fit in their own time, great men certainly appear from their posterity’ (聖人有明德者，若不當世，其後必有達人).³¹ The *Zhouyi dazhuan* (周易大傳), the earliest known commentary on the *Yijing*, further formulates this belief as, ‘the family accumulating goodness will definitely produce a residue of blessings, the family accumulating non-goodness will certainly have disaster left over (積善之家，必有餘慶；積不善之家，必有餘殃)’.³² The *Guoyu* also contains a similar idea. The text records that a certain prince of the Jin State, having said that Heaven had caused disaster on his family for generations, was worried that the residue of that misfortune could affect his own posterity.³³

This belief seemed to have widely spread in the third and second centuries BCE. In a third century work, the *Sanlue*, the author states that,³⁴

Evil’ (*East Asian History* 2), 1991, p. 26-7. However, archaeological finds tend to support contemporary Chinese scholars’ view that the concept was derived from the idea of family legacy of virtue and demerits in the *Yijing*. In fact Hendrischke also refers to what Zürcher has collected which shows that there is a belief in family legacy of good or evil deeds in early Daoist scriptures. See Hendrischke, ‘The concept of Inherited Evil’, p. 27; Erik Zürcher, ‘Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism’ (TP, LXVI, 1980), p. 136. Jens Østergård Petersen has also made a brief analysis with a survey of previous studies on this topic. See his ‘The Anti-Messianism of the Taiping Jing’ (*Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 3, 1990), pp. 14-19.

³⁰ Liu Zhaorui, ‘Chengfushuo yuanqilun’ (*Shijie zongjiao yanjiu*, 4, 1995), pp. 100-7.

³¹ CQZZ (zhaogong) 7: 1296. This reference seems to have been understood as the evidence that *baoying* started from the Chunqiu period. See Chen Xiaofang, ‘Zhongguo chuantong baoyingguan de yuantou’ (*Qiusuo*, 4, 2004), p. 171.

³² *Zhouyi dazhuan xinzhuan*, p. 30. This sentence was quoted by Liu Xiang as an ancient saying. See SYSZ (tancong)16: 439. Another of his works contains half of this saying, i.e. ‘the family that accumulates virtues will certainly have no disasters and calamities 積德之家必無殃災’. See XL (huailü) SBCK 2/6a.

³³ GY zhouyu C: 110.

³⁴ Xu Baolin, *Huangshi gong Sanlue qianshuo*, p. 103.

[one] injuring able and virtuous people will be inflicted by disasters for three generations... [one] recommending the able and virtuous ones, blessings will extendedly flow onto his children and grandchildren

傷賢者殃及三世……達賢者福流子孫。

Again, a general of the Western Han, named Chen Ping (陈平 d.178 BCE), was recorded to have said, ‘I have done too much secret plotting. My sons and grandsons will not flourish’.³⁵ In a different wording, an attachment to the silk book of the *Laozi* discovered in a Western Han tomb says that,³⁶

[That] those who are honest and good by nature die [is due to] the remaining misfortune of their ancestors. [That] those who are unruly and rampant flourish [is due to] the remaining merits of their ancestors.

貞良而忘，先人餘殃；猖獗而活，先人餘烈。

From Wang Chong’s treatise, the *Lunheng* (論衡, ‘discourse in the balance’), the concept that children received and transmitted the misdeeds of their parents appears to have become an obviously popular belief in the Eastern Han. One example Wang gives is that someone who perpetrated a crime would accept that it was their own fault but also blame the *fu* (負 ‘burden’) passed down from their ancestors as the troublemaker.³⁷ Sometime later, in the year 166, a government official in his memorial presented to Emperor Huan of the Latter Han (漢桓帝, i.e. 劉志, r.147-167) also quotes from what seems to be a popular saying that, ‘killing those who are not guilty of any wrongdoing and those who are able and virtuous, results in disasters extending to three generations (殺無罪，誅賢者，禍及後三世)’.³⁸ Almost around the same time or earlier, with the institutionalisation of Daoism, this idea was adopted into and occupied a central position in Daoist moral theory. It occurs in at least three Daoist texts compiled during this period. What is more, the earliest Daoist scripture, the *Taiping jing*, in which the term *chengfu* was first used, claims to be a book entirely eliminating *chengfu* on the order of Heaven.³⁹

³⁵ SJ 56: 2062.

³⁶ Guojia wenwuju gu wenxian yanjiu shi, *Mawangdui sanhao Hanmu boshu*, (3 vols., Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980) vol. 1, p. 82. An identical passage can be found in the *Shuoyuan* 16: 432.

³⁷ LH (biansui) 24: 375.

³⁸ HHS 30B: 1077.

³⁹ ‘吾書應天教，今欲一斷絕承負責也’，TPJHJ 92: 370. Daoists also regard most works of *Daojia* (道家, Daoist school), including the *Laozi* and *Yijing*, as texts

Two other texts containing the identical belief are the *Laozi heshang gong zhu* (老子河上公注 ‘Heshang Gong’s commentary to the *Laozi*’) and the *Laozi xiang-er zhu* (老子想爾注 ‘Xiang-er’s commentary to the *Laozi*’).⁴⁰ This has naturally led some to suggest that the *chengfu* is one of Daoism’s fundamental doctrines.⁴¹

Chengfu is sometimes controversially understood as an equivalent to the Western term ‘original sin’, since it is as old as Heaven and earth, and is therefore transmitted from the time of mankind’s origins.⁴² According to the *Taiping jing*, there are at least five kinds of *chengfu*, and the transfer of demerits from generation to generation is only one of them.⁴³ Briefly speaking, the *chengfu* theory seems to have two layers. First, on the cosmic level, the retribution of *chengfu* is realised in terms of historical epochs defined with respect to the degree of perfection of the cosmic *Dao*. So everything in one epoch is predetermined, and no changes can be brought about by human effort.⁴⁴ Secondly, on the human level it suggests that at birth one receives the burden left over from one’s ancestors, a brutal fact that is not under one’s control to avoid. There are five measures which could change the ‘fate of *chengfu*’ though. They are generally something like performing good deeds, of which (apart from the self-cultivation of *shouyi* 守一, ‘guarding the one’), the most important virtues repeatedly

proclaiming their faith, but the *Taiping jing* was the actual product of the earliest religious Daoist organisation. For an inquiry into the date of this text, see B.J. Mansvelt Beck, ‘The Date of the *Taiping jing*’ (TP, LXVI, 4-5, 1980), pp. 149-182.

⁴⁰ *Laozi Heshang gong zhu*, DZ. 363/ 3: 14a-b, *Laozi Xiang-er zhu jiaozheng*, p. 38.

⁴¹ Qing Xitai ed., *Zhongguo daojiao shi*, Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1988, p. 120.

⁴² Barbara Hendrichske, ‘The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*’, p. 12.

⁴³ The five are: 1) Later generations take blames for their ancestors’ wrong doings. 2) Humans take blames for the chaos and poverty of the country. 3) The environmental retribution. 4) Posterity takes suffering because the ancestor has taken false teachings. 5) Later rulers take blames for their predecessors’ demeritorious deeds. See Cheng Kun, ‘Shilun *Taiping jing* zhong zhi chengfushuo’ (*Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 2, 2002), pp. 20-1. A different observation of the practical measure to eradicate *chengfu* is made by Hendrichske: the distribution of texts, the deduction and training of disciples, and finally the disciples’ contact with leading political figures. See her ‘The Concept of Inherited Evil’, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Yuet Keung Lo, ‘Fatalism and Retribution in Late Han Religious Daoism’, in Bernard Hung-kay Luk ed., *Contacts Between Cultures—Eastern Asia: History and Social Sciences* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), vol. 4, p. 317.

and strongly suggested are basic Confucian values such as loyalty (to the ruler or one's lord), filial piety, fraternal love, self-cultivation, good relations with relatives and neighbours, honesty and faithfulness.⁴⁵ In doing these, one expects a reward from Heaven. Thus for the Han religious Daoists, the ultimate basis for advocating morality is belief both in an impartial Heaven as the arbiter of justice and in an innately good human nature presumably endowed by Heaven.⁴⁶ This shows that the *Taiping jing* was the first text openly linking *chengfu* and *baoying* together.⁴⁷

Comparing with other texts, the theory of *chengfu* in the *Taiping jing* appears much more concrete and complex. The following passage should be sufficient to adduce this point. To prove the effectiveness of *chengfu*, the *Taiping jing* produces one example, saying that

‘if parents lose their moral virtues and offend their neighbours, later their offspring will in turn be harmed by their neighbours in the village. This is to vindicate the efficacy of *chengfu*’.⁴⁸

若父母失道德，有過於鄉里，後子孫反為鄉里所害，是即明承負之驗。

In fact, it is in the *Taiping jing* that the supplementary role of *chengfu* to *baoying* is shown. It is a hard fact that in the world of experience good people sometimes meet a bad end, and bad people enjoy happiness. To this

⁴⁵ Yuet Keung Lo, ‘Fatalism and Retribution’, pp.319.

⁴⁶ TPJHJ 117: 664.

⁴⁷ But this is not without contradiction. For instance, the text states, ‘if people on earth are good Heaven will be good; people on earth are bad, Heaven will be bad. Thus, if people do good things on earth, Heaven will respond with goodness (and vice versa)... From an archaic time to the present, it is the nature of Heaven and earth that goodness attracts goodness and badness attracts badness, and that the righteous attracts the righteous and the evil attracts the evil. This is the way of nature, and should not be consider as abnormal. Therefore, if people's minds are straight and calm, the extreme honesty without vicious thoughts touches Heaven, auspicious and good things will appear for them’ (TPJHJ 18: 12). However, in another passage emphasising the importance of *chengfu*, the text refutes the idea that disasters on earth are the response from Heaven as humans has perpetrated some crime against the will of Heaven and says that it is due to the inherited sin that humans get disaster. This particularly goes for the ruler in whose reign the disaster comes because of his inherited sin from his previous ruler/s (TPJHJ 92: 370-73).

⁴⁸ TPJHJ 18: 22.

fact that directly invalidated *baoying* the *Taiping jing* comes to the rescue by saying that:⁴⁹

in relation to people's deeds, some try their best to be good and in return they get bad treatment; others try doing bad in everything and in return they get a good end. Thus the latter claim to be virtuous persons. This is not so. One who tries to do good things but reaps bad result does so [because] of inheriting sins from his ancestors. The disaster floats back and forth and accumulates to harm him. One who does bad things but meets a good end does so [because] his ancestors accumulated a great amount of merit which floats onto him.

凡人之行，或有力行善，反常得恶；或有力行恶，反得善。因自言为贤者，非也。力行善反得恶者，是承负先人之过，流灾前后，积来害此人也。其行恶反得善者，是先人深有积蓄大功，来流入此人也。

A new development of the *baoying* is the concept of *siming* (司命, lit. 'arbiter of human destiny') of which the earliest occurrence is in Zhou bronze inscriptions,⁵⁰ and then the *Zhuangzi* (莊子).⁵¹ According to the post-Qin version of this belief, a certain god (sometimes it is the 'stove god' 竈神 sent by Heaven), constantly watches over every movement of every individual human being and records his morally good or bad behaviour.⁵² The god then at a certain time reports to Heaven what he has recorded. Heaven then accordingly makes the decision to reward or punish. This belief is said to be a traditional Chinese belief, popular since pre-Qin times before it was adopted into the Daoist system at the latest after the Eastern Han.⁵³ It is thought that this belief was derived from the government bureaucracy that required either a central or local government official to inspect and report the social events at the end of every year.⁵⁴ As a religious belief, its earliest literary source, however, can only be

⁴⁹ TPJHJ 18: 22.

⁵⁰ Chen Ning, 'The Genesis of the Concept of Blind Fate', pp. 155-157.

⁵¹ ZZJJ (ZZJC vol. 3) zhile 5: 111.

⁵² Lü Simian, *Lunxue jilin* (Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), p. 672. *Siming* was originally a god of the star known as *wenchang* (文昌) to which people made sacrifices regularly, FSTYJS (*siming*) 8: 322.

⁵³ Xiao Dengfu, 'Daojiao siming silu xitong dui fojiao jianzhai ji shan-e tongzi shuo zhi yingxiang', in Gong Pengcheng ed., *Haixia liang-an daojiao wenhua xueshu yantaohui lunwen* (2 vols, Taiwan: Xuesheng shuju, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 85, 87-90.

⁵⁴ Xiao dengfu, 'Daojiao siming silu', pp. 91-92. For more detailed discussion of Daoist influence on Buddhism in this particular respect, see pp. 98-116.

dated back to Han times. Ban Gu's *Baihu tongyi* (白虎通議, 'discussion held in the white tiger Hall') seems to be the earliest text available today to contain this belief. In the *shouming* (壽命 'lifespan and fate') section, the text mentions a *siming* who reports human's wrongdoings to Heaven (司命舉過).⁵⁵ Another piece of hard literary evidence for this is an inscription found in an Eastern Han tomb.⁵⁶ In the inscription the *siming* was mentioned together with *silu* (司錄, arbiter of fate records). A slightly different wording is found in Zheng Xuan's commentary on the *Lunyü* in which it says that 'Heaven inspects the good and the bad (天檢善惡)'.⁵⁷

The first Daoist occurrence of a similar belief is the *Taiping jing* of which the 110th and 111th fascicles focus on the subject of the right and wrong doings of people and the recording gods. Generally speaking, this text says that if one does a good deed, he is naturally liable to have a long life, and vice versa, although the text also supports another important feature of *tianming*: that people's lifespan is determined at birth.⁵⁸ On the other hand, it denies the absolute fatalism of *tianming* by suggesting that the lifespan can be changed through doing good or bad deeds. At this point the text introduces another theory greatly resembling the belief in *siming*. It reads 'no matter what big or small mistakes [people make], Heaven knows them all. The record book records the good and bad [deeds] of the year. "It is marked daily and monthly, according to which people's lifespans are increased or decreased (過無大小, 天皆知之。簿書善惡之籍歲, 日月拘校, 前後出籌減年)."⁵⁹ That is to say: those who do good things elongate their life, those doing bad die young. Who is going to record people's deeds? The text says it is a messenger sent down by Heaven who is to watch and record how humans behave. The messenger is called *siming* and hides in the heart of people.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *Baihu tongde lun*, SBCK 8: 4b-5b. But in later short-story collections, the *siming* is also said to be willing to help people, e.g., YML, p. 37.

⁵⁶ Some inscriptions of this type were cited in Wu Rongzeng's 'Zhenmu wen zhong suo jiandao de Donghan daowu guanxi' (*Wenwu* 3, 1982), p. 59.

⁵⁷ *Lunyü jizhu* quotes Zhen Xuan's word, SBBY 20:2a.

⁵⁸ TPJHJ 110: 525.

⁵⁹ TPJHJ 110: 526, 537.

⁶⁰ TPJHJ 18: 12, 110: 526, 114: 600. This is different from other Daoist scriptures. For instance, the *Baopu zi* says the messenger is a god despatched by Heaven, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, 6: 125.

1.2. Fatalism

As another facet of *tianming*, the belief that people's fate is predetermined by Heaven was first associated with the last ruler of the Shang, who before his execution sighed 'I was born with nothing; my fate is down to Heaven (我生不有命在天)'.⁶¹ The fact that this particular information comes from a section of the *Shangshu* which might not have been composed in the Shang and on some other sources leads some to conclude that the idea must have appeared in the Western Zhou.⁶² Similar to this belief is an ancient saying quoted by one of Confucius' disciples and approved by the latter: 'to live or to die is a matter of fate, being rich or poor is down to Heaven (死生有命, 富贵在天)'.⁶³ Confucius himself is said to have made the remark that 'a *junzi* leads a life of relaxation and ease while awaiting his fate. Vile persons try their luck by engaging themselves in dangerous business (君子處易以俟命, 小人行險以僥幸)'.⁶⁴ Even more apposite is his other remark in the *Lunyu*. Once visiting one of his disciples who was ill, Confucius was reported to have attributed the disciple's state to fate.⁶⁵ Another unambiguous remark of his about fate was quoted in the *Zhuangzi*. It is said that Confucius was once trapped on the way to another state. In answering a stranger's question, Confucius said, 'that I have tried to avoid poverty for a long time without success is because of my fate. That I have been seeking for a government position for long without achievement is because it is not the right time for me (我諱窮久矣而不免, 命也。求通久矣而不得, 時也)'.⁶⁶ Again, the idea that life and death is a matter of fate appears in three passages of the *Zuozhuan*.⁶⁷ A bamboo manuscript belonging to the early part of the Warring States period and discovered in a tomb in the 1990's simply says that 'disposition comes from fate, and fate is descended from Heaven (性自命出, 命自天降)', which somehow echoes the words of another

⁶¹ *Shangshu yizhu*, p. 104.

⁶² Lü Simian, *Lü Simian dushi zhaji* (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), pp. 485-493.

⁶³ LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) yanyuan 15: 264.

⁶⁴ LH (xing-ou) 2: 16. This fatalism is also reflected in the *liming* (力命) section of the *Liezi*. In this section, the author particularly emphasizes that fate is everything, *Liezi jishi* 6: 192-215.

⁶⁵ LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) yongye 7: 119-20. In another passage, he even says that the fortune of his Dao is also down to fate, although there the fate may have meant 'the will of Heaven', LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) xianwen 17: 323.

⁶⁶ ZZJJ (ZZJC vol. 3) qiushui 4: 106.

⁶⁷ CQZZ (dinggong) 15: 1601; (zhaogong) 20: 1414, 21: 1425.

Confucian classic, the *Zhongyong*.⁶⁸ This frequent ascription of fatalism to the Confucian tradition is unmistakably confirmed by Wang Chong who explicitly points out that Confucians believed in deterministic fatalism while Mohists did not.⁶⁹ This fatalism, which later holds that life and death like being rich or poor and longevity or dying young, all are determined at the ‘dark beginning’ (冥初)⁷⁰ is shown by some cases mentioned in the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*.⁷¹ But the earliest elaborated example is a story contained in a text from the third century BCE, the *Lüshi chungiu*, which reads as follows:⁷²

Once when Kong Jia, a sovereign of the house of Xia,⁷³ was hunting at Mount Fu in Dongyang, there was a great wind and the sky darkened. Kong Jia, lost and confused, entered the house of a commoner. At that very moment the woman of the house was giving birth. Someone said, ‘when the sovereign comes, it is a lucky day. Your son is certain to enjoy extraordinary good fortune’. Another person said, ‘He is not equal to it. Your son is certain to suffer some catastrophe’. The sovereign thereupon seized the child and returned home with him, saying ‘If I make him my son, who will dare to harm him?’ The boy grew to maturity. The tent moved and caused an axe to fall, which in turn chopped off his foot. Thus he became a gatekeeper. Kong Jia cried, ‘Alas! Suffering affliction is also a matter of fate after all!’

夏後氏孔甲田於東陽萇山，天大風晦盲，孔甲迷惑，入於民室，主人方乳。或曰：‘後來是良日也，之子必大吉’。或曰：‘不勝也，之子必有殃’。後乃取其子以歸，曰：‘以爲余子，誰敢殃之’。子長成人，幕動圻木+斲斧斲斬其足，遂爲守門者。孔甲曰：‘嗚呼，有疾，命矣乎！’

⁶⁸ *Guodian Chumu zhujian* (Jingmenshi bowuguan ed., Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), p. 179; *Zhongyong* in *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 11: 17.

⁶⁹ LH (mingyi) 2: 17.

⁷⁰ Zu Taizhi's (祖台之) *Lunming*, in QSGSDQHLCW, vol. 3, p. 2260.

⁷¹ For a list of the cases, see Cho-yun Hsu, ‘The Concept of Predetermination and Fate in the Han’ (*Early China*, 1, 1975), pp. 51-6.

⁷² LSCQJS (yinchu) 6: 334. The story is mentioned in other texts such as LH (shuxu) 4: 63; JLZJZ (zaji) 6: 259, etc. The translation is basically Knoblock and Riegel's except for the sentences about how Kong Jia became disabled. See John Knoblock & Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, pp. 160-61. For annotations of the terms *mudong* (幕動) and *zhuozhan* (斲斬), and the reason why people disabled in the feet were fit only to be doorkeepers/gatekeepers, see LSCQJS (yinchu) 6: 337-38.

⁷³ Gao You says Kong Jia was the fourteenth generation of Yu the Great, LSCQJS (yinchu) 6: 336.

Such a belief in fatalism can easily inspire the development of a sceptical view towards moral beliefs, although that view may also have developed as a reaction to the impracticality of the principle of *baoying*. This scepticism first appeared in the Warring States period. In the *Xunzi*, there is an interesting paragraph describing an event when Confucius, who claimed that he had known *tianming* when he reached fifty,⁷⁴ was stuck on the way to the Chu (楚) State. At that time he and his disciples went through some severe difficulties, including lack of food. One of his favourite disciples, named Zilu (子路), asked him:⁷⁵

I heard that to people doing good things Heaven responds with fortune and that to people doing unkind things Heaven responds with misfortune. Now, master, you have piled virtues, accumulated righteousness and cherished perfections. You have done that for a long time, why do [you still] stay hidden?

由聞之，為善者，天報之以福，為不善者天報之以禍。今夫子累德，積義懷美，行之日久矣，奚居之隱也？

Instead of giving Zilu a straight answer, Confucius only provided him with some similar examples showing that great persons did not always get lucky. It is impossible for us to know whether in this case Confucius did not know the answer or preferred not to answer him directly.⁷⁶ Another account in the *Lunyu* may shed some light. This episode says that once when Confucius was ill, again it was Zilu who asked to pray for him. To this suggestion, Confucius said ‘do you think so?’ Zilu said ‘yes’. Then someone started to pray. At this point Confucius said ‘I have prayed for a long time!’⁷⁷ We can deduce that Confucius tended not to believe too much in Heaven’s power to help ordinary people. Or this was at least Xun Kuang’s standpoint. Xun certainly did not believe in a spiritual Heaven. For him Heaven was just nature, and disasters or blessings were just its reactions to the behaviour of humans in obeying or disobeying its laws. He even denies that Heaven speaks through portents or responds to man’s

⁷⁴ LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) weizheng 2: 23.

⁷⁵ XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) youzuo 20: 345.

⁷⁶ This event was interpreted by different schools of thought before the Han. For a discussion of the interpretations before and during Han times, see Chen Ning, ‘Mohist, Daoist, and Confucian Explanations of Confucius’ Suffering in Chen-Cai’ (*Monumenta Serica* 51, 2003), pp. 37-54. Whatever standpoints the interpreters took do not affect our argument here, since their views were not made to suspect the belief in heavenly punishment and reward.

⁷⁷ LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) shu-er 8: 152.

morally intended actions.⁷⁸ Yet, he still encourages people to do good things and thereby to create the heart of a sage.⁷⁹

Following this line of thought, there are a few other notable people who also suspected the workings of *baoying*. Sima Qian discovered that it was easy to name events in history that utterly disproved the belief of *baoying*. In the biography of Bo Yi in his *Shiji*, he remarks.⁸⁰

‘some say that “Heaven has no partial affection but always protects the good”. People like Bo Yi and Shu Qi were good persons, weren’t they? They accumulated kindness and lived upright lives but died of hunger. Among his seventy disciples, Confucius particularly praised Yan Yuan for being fond of learning. However, Hui (i.e. Yan Yuan) himself was often in a state of poverty. He didn’t even reject coarse food, such as chaff, and so, he died young. How can it be like this that Heaven rewards and protects good people? Dao Zhi killed innocent people everyday, and ate human’s livers. He was so ruthless and tyrannical, gathering a gang of thousands and acting against law and reason everywhere under Heaven, but he actually died a natural death. What virtue system did he follow?

或曰‘天道無親，常與善人’。若伯夷叔齊，可謂善人，非邪？積仁潔行如此而餓死。且七十之徒，仲尼獨薦顏淵好學。然回也屢空，糟糠不厭，而卒早夭。天之報施善人，何如哉？盜跖日殺不辜，肝人之肉，暴戾恣睢，聚黨數千人，橫行天下，竟以壽終，是尊何德哉？

This scepticism was also continued by others in later times. Wang Chong, for instance, was one of them. He devoted a whole section to deny the workings of *baoying*. To start with, he said, ‘they say that if one does good things blessings will arrive and that if one does bad things misfortune will come... this is certainly the utterances used by some able persons and sages of a certain time in order to exhort people to do good deeds (世論行善者福至，為惡者禍來……斯言或時賢聖欲勸人為善，作必然之語)’.⁸¹ Then, he listed quite a few historical events which demonstrated opposite conclusions to those shown in the law of *baoying*.

⁷⁸ XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) xiushen 1: 21, tianlun 11: 205-213.

⁷⁹ XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) quanxue 1: 4.

⁸⁰ SJ 61: 2124-125.

⁸¹ LH (fuxu) 6: 85. It is interesting to note that this *baoying* idea can be traced back to the *Shangshu* and the *Yijing*, both of which were accepted as classics of the Confucian tradition on the one hand, but people who doubt this idea were also Confucian scholars on the other.

Unlike previous opponents, Wang Chong not only confronted the *baoying* theory, but he also pieced together a new system by making use of fatalism, wishing to explain from another angle why good and virtuous people sometime suffered while the bad and vicious enjoyed happiness.⁸² He simply did not accept the previous version of fatalism, but elaborated upon the concept of *sanming* (三命, three-fold fate) which was likely to derive itself from another ancient belief more or less related to *tianming*, if not actually part of it.⁸³ A Chinese archaeologist suggests that the earliest occurrence of this *sanming* notion can be dated back to the Warring States period and that the idea itself was closely related to the *chengfu*.⁸⁴ The term *sanming* as in the present sense was first used in the *Baihu tongyi*. In this fragmentary work, the notion of *sanming* is expounded in no more than a few words, from which we can hardly derive a substantial meaning.⁸⁵ Therefore for a proper look at this theory, we have to turn to Wang Chong's version.

Wang Chong's theory of *sanming* is mainly presented in the *mingyi* (命義, 'the meaning of fate') section of his *Lunheng*. He first declares that no life is without accident, particularly in so far as one's career is concerned. Whether or not one can be appointed to a government position is not a matter of ability or virtue, but of luck. Banking on chance, cultivating oneself cannot make blessings come. Being prudent and cautious cannot avoid disasters. Why? It is simply because the visits of disasters and blessings are all down to luck.⁸⁶ However, Wang does not believe the whole of life to be down to luck. Like Mencius, he believes that what really matters to one's life is *ming* (命 'fate') which mainly shows itself in two categories: on the one hand lifespan and economic

⁸² Cf. Jan Yün-hua, 'The Chinese Understanding and Assimilation of Karma Doctrine', in Ronald W Neufeldt, ed., *Karma and Rebirth: Post Classical Development* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1986), p. 147.

⁸³ A partially similar belief is touched upon by the MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) jinxinA 13: 518-19.

⁸⁴ Liu Zhaorui, 'Chengfushuo yuanqilun', p. 102. We do not see a link between *sanming* and *chengfu* though.

⁸⁵ *Baihu tongde lun*, SBCK 8: 4b-5b; Tjoe Som Tjan, transl. *Po Hu T'ung: comprehensive Discussion in the White Tiger Hall* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1952), vol. 2, pp. 572-73.

⁸⁶ '修身正行，不能來福；戰慄戒慎，不能避禍。禍福之至，幸不幸也'. LH (leihai)1: 4-5.

status, and on the other *xing* (性, 'nature' or 'constitution').⁸⁷ The former is from Heaven and is good or ill-natured, and the latter is decided at the time of conception and is the 'principal matter of auspiciousness or inauspiciousness (吉凶之主)'.⁸⁸ People are fated to live long or to die young, and are also fated to be rich or poor.⁸⁹ About the latter, he explains 'if one's fate should be to be poor and humble, even if one is in a rich state, one will at some point be involved in misfortune and disasters, and vice versa. The reason for this is because fate is of two types: the first is accidental, mainly concerning luck and misfortunes. The second concerns the length of one lifespan, decided by one's inborn strength'.⁹⁰ Then Wang shows us that this fatalist belief was not his own invention. He quotes Confucius' remark previously noted in this chapter, and then lists similar views of historical figures such as Liu An, Jia Yi, Yang Xiong and Sima Qian.⁹¹ At this point, Wang reveals the multiple features of fate as well as the proper part of the *sanming* theory.

He begins explaining *sanming* with the phrase *chuanyue* (傳曰 'tradition holds') from which it is clear that the idea was not his own.⁹² His *sanming* theory is best presented in his own words:⁹³

Commentaries say that speaking of fates there are three: one is main fate, two is concomitant fate, and three is accidental fate. Main fate is received originally and gains luck, [it is] good in nature so it does not need cultivation in order to seek blessings but the auspicious naturally come. This is called main fate. The concomitant fate is that working hard in cultivating conduct gets auspiciousness and luck, and indulging oneself in expressing desires then gets inauspiciousness and disasters. This is called concomitant fate. The accidental fate means that doing good results in bad, which is not what [the doer] expects [because] the results of

⁸⁷ Lin Huisheng, 'Chengfu yu lunhui—baoying lilun jianli de kaosuo', in Gong Pengcheng ed. *Haixia liang-an dao jiao wenhua xueshu yantaohui lunwen*, p. 267-68.

⁸⁸ LH (mingyi) 2: 17, (ouhui) 3: 33.

⁸⁹ LH (minglu) 1: 8.

⁹⁰ LH (qishou) 1: 11.

⁹¹ LH (minglu) 1: 10.

⁹² The *Bowu zhi* states that people labelled the writings of sages with *jing* (經, classic) and those of scholars with *zhuan* (傳), *Bowu zhi jiaozheng*, p. 72. In the dictionary sense, one meaning of the *zhuan* is 'commentaries on the classics'.

⁹³ LH (mingyi) 2: 19. This theory is also found in a lost text called *Chunqiu yuanming bao* (春秋元命苞) quoted in the TPYL 360: 1656.

inauspiciousness and disasters encountered are beyond expectation. Therefore it is called accidental fate.

傳曰：‘說命有三，一曰正命，二曰隨命，三曰遭命。’正命，謂本稟之自得吉也，性然骨善，故不假操行以求福而吉自至，故曰正命。隨命者，戮力操行而吉福至，縱情施欲而凶禍到，故曰隨命。遭命者，行善得惡，非所冀望，逢遭于外，而得凶禍，故曰遭命。

While presenting his position, Wang Chong selects historical events to substantiate every single point he makes so as to prove his opinion. Viewed from any position, his theory of fate could easily fit into the category of fatalism, although his *zaoming* shows features of accidentalism.

What has been discussed briefly so far is the Chinese indigenous ethical system which was divided roughly between moral determinism and fatalism. It was into this complex background of moralistic and fatalistic ideas that Buddhism arrived and developed on Chinese soil. Buddhism came with its own ethical system. Was its ethics compatible with the Chinese thoughts described above? Or, rather, since the transmission of Buddhism to China was a very successful one, the question should be: How did the Chinese moral system negotiate with Buddhist moral beliefs? To answer this, we first need to look at the Buddhist doctrines of karma and moral causation, the kernel of its moral beliefs, and then trace the early process of the encounter between these two systems.

2. The Buddhist Doctrine of Moral Causality

Buddhist moral beliefs can be collectively defined as moral causality. As far as the Chinese Buddhist translations are concerned, Buddhist moral causality is a combination of (1) the concept of karma (*xing* 行 or *ye* 業, ‘action/deed’), (2) the belief in *yinyuan* (因緣, ‘cause and condition’) and (3) the principle of *yinguo* (因果 ‘cause-effect’). Each of the two last terms has two layers of meaning. The first layer is their basic, perhaps original, usage, i.e. they are used respectively for referring to the central doctrine of ‘dependent origination’ (*yuanqi*, 緣起) and the philosophical causality in Abhidharma literature.⁹⁴ The second layer is their moral usage appearing

⁹⁴ Buddhist philosophical analysis of *yinguo* was sophisticatedly elaborated in later scholastic treatises. E.g. *Apidamo jushe lun* (阿毘達磨俱舍論), T. 29, pp. 30a-40c. For a view on the logic relationship between Buddhist causality and karma, see

in two other types of Buddhist literature, namely the *nidāna* (因緣) and *avadāna* (*piyu* 譬喻, ‘metaphor’). Both genres are expressed through stories designed to illustrate moral values by referring either to incidents in the Buddha’s and others’ lives or to metaphors. It is this second layer of meaning that links them to the concept of karma. Yet, the relation between these three notions is frequently left unclarified.⁹⁵ The paragraphs which follow are not meant to provide an in-depth analysis of this relation. Their common feature is that they all express the law of universal causation, according to which people must bear the consequences of their moral and immoral actions. The subject is approached mainly through exploring the concept of karma, since all three are directly related to people’s actions.⁹⁶

Yang Zhenghe, ‘Lun fojiao yinguo faze de luoji jixi’ (*Taida zhexue lunping*, 6, 1983), pp. 83-101.

⁹⁵ Bruce R. Reichenbach has attempted to clarify the relation between causality and karma in Indian religious context, but some features he assigns are not suitable for the Buddhist case because Buddhist karma is, at least in its early history, different from those of Jainism and Hinduism. See his ‘The Law of Karma and the Principle of Causation’ (*Philosophy East and West* 38: 4, 1988), pp. 399-410.

⁹⁶ Karma was not put forth by the Buddha, although it is deeply rooted in Buddhism and considered to be one of the four things which are said to be most difficult to understand, *Dengji zhongde sanmei jing* (等集眾德三昧經) T. 12, p. 987a; *Foshuo wuliangshou jing* (佛說無量壽經) T.12, p. 270a. It is one of the many concepts shared by most Indian religious traditions and philosophical schools. It originated in the Vedic period (i.e. prior to 900BCE). There have been two views about the development of this concept. One view holds that there was no karma idea of a conspicuously ethical sense in Vedic tradition since there the term ‘karma’ meant no other than ‘ritual action’. The other view holds that there is a continuous and straight development line of karma starting from the Vedic tradition through Buddhism and other later Indian religions. This is not the right place to judge which of these two is more acceptable, but suffice it to point out that scholars generally agree that the earliest reference to an ethical notion of karma occurred only about the sixth century BCE when the first Upaniṣads were compiled (Gananath Obeyesekere, *Imagining Karma*, pp. 1-4). It is also true that the Buddhist karma was first adopted from that of Upaniṣads. And like the early Upaniṣadic thinkers, the Buddha’s interpretation of karma is not ‘ritual action’ but the law of morals and particularly the volition behind the moral or immoral deeds as well as the deeds themselves, which are stated in a Chinese translation as ‘thought and thought-after’ (ZAHJ, T. 1, p. 437c). For karma and rebirth in early Indian history, see Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty ed., *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1980. For a brilliant survey of Buddhist Karma, see H. G. A van Zeyst, ‘Karma and Rebirth’ (*The Maha Bodhi*, 80:7, 1970), pp. 198-204; for a preliminary investigation into the sectarian development of Buddhist karma, see Thomas L. Dowling, ‘Karma

In opposition to Brahmanism, the Buddha declares that people are not what they are born as but what they do.⁹⁷ This message is presented in a conversation between a householder and the Buddha:

At that time, the elder Shu Jia said to the world-honoured one, ‘all sentient beings are different: short-lived and long-lived, diseased and without disease, handsome and ugly, noble and humble by caste, clever and stupid, and mild and rude. What are the cause and effect and good or bad retributions and responses?’ The Buddha tells elder Shu Jia, ‘Well asked! Well asked! You should listen carefully and reflect and remember what I shall tell you now. All sentient beings are different by being good or bad in committing karma to build the cause [for future lives], [therefore] the retribution and response they receive are also different by being noble or humble, at the top or the bottom [of society], high or low in caste.’⁹⁸

爾時，輸伽長者白世尊言：‘一切有情天壽長命、有病無病、端嚴醜陋、貴賤種族、聰明愚鈍、柔和麤曠，其事非一。因果善惡，報應云何’？佛告輸伽長者言：‘善哉！善哉！汝應諦聽，善思念之，今為汝說。一切有情，作業修因，善惡不等，所獲報應，貴賤上下，種族高低，差別亦殊’。

Apart from explaining that people's deeds are the causes that make them physically, intellectually and socially different from one another, the above passage also conveys the concept that people's deeds will bear consequences which are called *karma-vipāka* (normally translated as *yebao* 業報). In the meantime, this passage also offers a view on karma that is rather different from, if not contrary to, the karma presented in the earliest sūtras; karma in this passage is fatalistic, whereas early Buddhist texts are often explicitly against the ascription of this fatalistic feature to

Doctrine and Sectarian Development’, in A. K. Narain ed., *Studies in Pali and Buddhism*, pp. 83-92; for Theravadin scholastic theory of kamma, see James P. McDermott, ‘Undetermined and Indeterminate Kamma’ (*Indo-Iranian Journal*), 1977, pp. 31-35.

⁹⁷ For the Brahmanic belief and the Buddha's criticisms, see *Bieyi za ahan jing*, T. 2, p. 409a; CYJ, T.4, p. 681b; *Chang ahan jing*, T. 1, 36c; ZAHJ, T. 1, pp. 664a-b, 674a; etc. The Buddhist position has been understood by some as the Buddhist underlying reason for preaching morals, Robert Zeuschner, ‘The Understanding of Karma in Early Ch'an Buddhism’ (*Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 8, 1981), p. 400.

⁹⁸ *Fenbie shan-e baoyin jing*, T. 1, p. 896b. More detailed discussions can be found in the *Foshuo lunzhuan wudao zuifu baoying jing* (佛說輪轉五道罪福報應經).

karma.⁹⁹ The early Buddhist doctrine of karma, unlike that of the Jains, is that unless a deed is done with intention, there will be no fruit for the karma, i.e. they emphasise that only intentional and ethically motivated actions have karmic effects.¹⁰⁰ However, in most of the Chinese translations, whether or not a deed has a consequence depends on the moral nature of the deed, rather than on its intention. This idea can be seen at least in some of the earliest Chinese translations.¹⁰¹ In a hagiographical work, the Buddha is said to have ten supernatural powers, one of which is the ability to see that beings' good or bad deeds will bear blessing or disastrous consequences (善惡殃福, 隨行受報).¹⁰² A third century translation simply says, 'doing good results in good, doing bad results in bad (為善則得善, 為惡則得惡)'.¹⁰³ Another early translation even specifies the consequences of the deeds by saying that 'those who carry out bad [deeds] will be in hell, in a hungry ghost world, and in the world of animals after they die. Those who engage in good [deeds]...will either be reborn into heaven or into the human world' (施行惡者, 死入泥犁餓鬼畜生鬼神中。施行善者……或生天上, 或生人中).¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ In the ZAHJ (T. 1, pp. 442c), the Buddha specifically points out that the Jains believed that everything a man endured was the outcome of what he did in his previous life/lives. In another sermon of the same text (T. 1, p. 435b), this view, although not identified to be Jain, is refuted. A similar sermon is found in the *Za ahan jing* (T. 2, p. 252c), the *Bieyi za ahan jing* (T. 2, p. 452b). For a brief survey of the non-fatalistic feature of Buddhist karma, see Kotatsu Fujita, 'The Doctrinal Characteristics of Karman in Early Buddhism', in L. A. Hercus et al. eds., *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Australian National University, 1982), pp. 149-59.

¹⁰⁰ 'The World-honoured tells the monks, "If the actions are intentionally done, I say the doer will have to receive its retribution. He will receive it in this life, or in future lives. If one does not intentionally act, I say he will not receive retribution"' (世尊告諸比丘: '若有故作業, 我說彼必受其報: 或現世受, 或後世受。若不故作業, 我說此不必受報', ZAHJ, T. 1, p. 437c). Cf. Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism*, pp. 67-9.

¹⁰¹ Of the earliest Buddhist translations, those of An Shigao and Zhi Chen do not seem to contain conspicuous reference to the concept of karma, since the former's are almost exclusively about the fundamental teachings of early Buddhism, and the latter's the Bodhisattva ideal.

¹⁰² *Xiuxing benqi jing*, T. 3, p. 472a, *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, T. 3, p. 478c; *Puyao jing*, T. 3, p. 522b.

¹⁰³ *Faju jing*, T. 4, pp. 565a, 570a.

¹⁰⁴ *Ahan zhengxing jing*, T. 2, p. 883c.

Furthermore, the inevitability of consequences following bad actions seems to be unavoidable, particularly regarding the five heinous offences caused by the five serious immoral deeds,¹⁰⁵ which can neither be annulled nor changed but follow the doer until exhausted by taking effect.¹⁰⁶ This unavoidability is vividly indicated in a simile of form and its shadow: 'one gets what one deserves according to what one does; by doing good one gets fortune, by doing bad, misfortune follows. This is like the shadow that follows the form. How is one able to avoid it? (隨行所造，而受其報。為善受福，惡則禍隨。如影隨形，有何可免)',¹⁰⁷ Still, the discourses specifically devoted to the explanation of karma in the *Zhong ahan jing* demonstrate that unless they practise Buddhism, people will definitely reap the results of their good and bad deeds carried out through their minds, mouths, and bodies.¹⁰⁸ What is more, this rule is applied to every single being in the universe, including the last human life of all enlightened beings; the Buddha is no exception.¹⁰⁹ So, not surprisingly, the

¹⁰⁵ *Asheshi wang wen wuni jing* (阿闍世王問五逆經), T. 14, p. 775c. A story tells of a pigeon which is said to have been a pigeon for eight great *kalpas* (aeons) (DZDL, T. 25, p. 139a). Another story (LDJJ, T. 3, p. 30a-b) tells of a Buddhist who believed he had committed sin by drink water from a garden without letting the owner know. Knowing that the sin would cause him to be reborn in hell and then as animals, he took self-punishment in the hope of replacing the severe cosmic punishment in future.

¹⁰⁶ The Buddha says there are seven things that cannot be changed. Among the seven three are merit, sin, and cause-effect. The last is an alternative phrase for karma (*Faju piyu jing* T. 4, p. 591a.).

¹⁰⁷ CYJ, T. 4, p. 618c, similarly in LDJJ, T. 3, p. 18b, 24a, 31c, 35b, 36c; *Foshuo bojing chao* (佛說孛經抄), T. 17, p. 735b; Chengshi lun, T.32, pp. 289b, 300b; *Foshuo zhangzhezi aonao sanchu jing* (佛說長者子懊惱三處經), T. 14, p. 800c; *Shengjing*, T. 3, pp. 94b, 99b; etc.

¹⁰⁸ T. 1, pp. 433a-448c. Also ZAHJ, T. 2, p. 272c. Scholastic discussions of karma are normally found in more philosophical section of the canon, i.e. the Abhidharma texts. For instance, see *Shelifu apitan lun*, T. 28, pp. 537b-38a. A systematic analysis of karma is the *ye* section of *Apidamo jushe lun*, T. 29, pp. 67b-98b.

¹⁰⁹ In one of the Han translations (*Foshuo xingqi xing jing* 佛說興起行經, T. 4, p. 167c.), a story tells us that the Buddha once in his previous life was a ksatriya wrestler. He was promised by a Brahmin wrestler that if he faked losing the game he would be given money. The ksatriya wrestler agreed and faked twice, but the Brahmin did not keep his promise. The ksatriya wrestler raised a touch of hatred. In the third time, he won the game. Because of that little hatred, the ksatriya wrestler suffered in various hells. Even enlightened as a Buddha, the karma of the hatred made him suffer from backache. There are still other stories in this text showing that the Buddha suffered from the bad karma of his previous lives (T. 4,

consequences of deeds are also brought by beings reborn in the happiest world of Amitabha; there, they are manifested in the quality of the beings' enjoyment.¹¹⁰ It may be because of this feature that karma is regarded by some as moral determinism.¹¹¹

The second feature of karma concerns the time when the consequences of karma take effect. As shown in the preceding paragraph, the harvest of the consequences could take place in a future life. The most straightforward description of the way this works can be seen in the passage of the following treatise. It goes as follows:

In the sūtras the Buddha speaks of three kinds of karma: [that which brings] present retribution, [that which brings] retribution in next birth, and [that which brings] retribution in future lives. What are they? Answers: if the karma is committed in this life¹¹² and received its [effect] in this life as well, it is called present retribution. Karma committed in this life but with its retribution received in the next life is called next birth retribution. Karma committed in this life and its effect received in the life after the next is called future retribution.

經中佛說三種業：現報、生報、後報業。何者是耶？答曰：若此身造業，即此身受，是名現報。此世造業次來世受，是名生報。此世造業過次世受，是名後報。¹¹³

Although the text does not explain what type of deeds will result in the present, the next or future life, it seems to be certain that the general principle is that the consequences of deeds could come in different times and in different lives. This principle indicates that karma works hand in hand with rebirth. This leads to the third feature of karma.

The third feature of karma as expressed in Buddhism and as received in China is that its consequences could only affect the doer himself. It neither extends to nor allows for substitution from one's closest relatives or descendants.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, nobody can change this rule. In an early

pp. 168a-70b.), including the event in which the Buddha's foot was injured by the stone which was used to attempt on his life by Devadatta (T. 4, p. 170b-c).

¹¹⁰ See Tanluan's (曇鸞 476-542) *Lüelun anle jinguiyi* (略論安樂淨土義), XZ. Vo. 107, pp. 416a-17a.

¹¹¹ V. P. Varma, 'The Origins and Sociology of the Early Buddhist Philosophy of Moral Determinism' (*Philosophy East and West* 13:1, 1963), p. 26.

¹¹² Here the character 身 is taken as a variant of 生.

¹¹³ *Chengshi lun* (成實論), T. 32, p. 297b-c; FSDBNPJ T. 12, p. 599c; etc.

¹¹⁴ 'Good and bad [karma] will always follow the doer. If the father has bad karma, his son will not suffer [the consequence of] that, and vice versa; to die and to be

sūtra, a simile tells us that to pray for somebody else's de-meritorious deeds is as impossible as praying for the washing up of a stone that has been thrown into the river.¹¹⁵ This means that the doer has to be reborn in order to take the consequence of his deeds. However, contradictory as it may be, some texts do suggest that karma can be extinguished not only through the doer's repentance but also under certain circumstances by the transference of merits.¹¹⁶ It was perhaps this belief that led to the development of another more prevailing idea that saintliness is able to immediately extinguish demerits.¹¹⁷ Following this development in later Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna Buddhism, karma, however serious, is said to be subject to the power of the Buddha or Bodhisattvas, or of *dhāraṇi*.¹¹⁸

From the brief discussion above, it becomes clear that Buddhist moral causality has something in common with Chinese moral determinism.¹¹⁹

born is a matter of one's own, good karma and bad karma follow only its doer.' (善惡隨身。父有過惡，子不獲殃，子有過惡，父不獲殃；各自生死，善惡殃咎，各隨其身。 See the *Bannihuan jing*, T. 1, p. 181b. This is quoted in the *Fengfa yao*, T. 52, p. 87b. Similar idea can also be seen in the *Qishi jing* (起世經), T. 1, p. 331b, 386a-b; the CYJ, T. 4, p. 753c; the *Youposai jiejing* (優婆塞戒經), T. 24, p. 1059c.etc.

¹¹⁵ ZAHJ, T. 1, p. 440a.

¹¹⁶ *Youposai jiejing*, T. 24, p. 1059c. The transference of merit to one's dead parents can be found in early Indian practices, particular by building pagoda, or making offerings to the Saṃgha. For the practice in Indian, see Gregory Schopen 'Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions' (*Indo-Iranian Journal*, 21, 1979), pp. 1-19. The earliest known case of this practice in China was recorded in an inscription dated 512 and collected in Yan Kejun's QSGSDQHLCW, vol. 4, pp. 3769-70. E. Zürcher has shown that Daoists at an early period also borrowed this idea and practice, although he mistakenly believes that this doctrine is limited to Mahāyāna Buddhism. See his 'Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism' (TP, LXVI, 1: 3, 1980), pp. 132, 137. For this practice in Theravada Buddhism, see chapter 5 of Richard F. Gombrich's *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in Rural Highlands of Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, 1971.

¹¹⁷ For instance, see *Shiziyue fo bensheng jing* (師子月佛本生經 unknown translation made in 5th cent.) in which when a monkey received the basic Buddhist precepts just before its death, its bad karma immediately vanquished, and the monkey was reborn as a human being and became an arhant (T. 3. pp. 443c-446a).

¹¹⁸ *Foshuo dabanniepan jing*, T. 12, p. 893b; *Foshuo baoyu jing*, T. 16, p. 294a; *Wugou jingguang da tuoluoni jing* (無垢淨光大陀羅尼經), T. 19, p. 721a, etc.

¹¹⁹ A brief and superficial comparison between the Chinese *baoying* and the Buddhist *yinguo* has been made available from an ethnological perspective. See

The relationship between people's deeds and their consequences easily reminds us of the Chinese moral belief of *baoying*. In fact, in other early Buddhist translations quite a large number of stories are used to illustrate this principle, although in many cases they are just related incidents from different people's lives.¹²⁰ In the meantime, as shown in the passages quoted previously and in other translations, whenever this principle is spoken of, terms such as *yinguo*, *yinguo baoying*, *zuifu baoying* (罪福報應 'retribution-response to the meritorious and the demeritorious'), or *shan-e baoying* (善惡報應 'retribution-response to the good and the bad') are used. These terms, except *yinguo*, no doubt show that the translators had already noticed and took advantage of the similarities between the Chinese *baoying* and Buddhist moral beliefs. *Yinguo* can be taken as a Buddhist moral principle that can hardly be said to absolutely differ from the working of karma, because the concept of karma exactly demonstrates the principle of cause and effect. To take but one example: in the *Shengjing*, there is a story about a man's rebirth. One morning, on the way to a city for an alms-round, the Buddha and his disciples saw a city man who was going to kill an ox which he had just bought. On seeing the Buddha, the ox broke the rope and rushed to the Buddha. It spoke to the Buddha, asking for refuge. The Buddha accepted it. To answer his disciples' curiosity, the Buddha told them another story. He said that a very long time ago, there was a universal king who ruled the universe righteously. One day during his rounds of inspection, he saw his kinsman bound to a tree by his creditor. So the king promised the creditor that he would pay for his relative and the man was released, but the creditor later failed to receive the promised money from the king or from his kinsman. Having repudiated the debt, the debtor was reborn as an ox. The Buddha identified that he himself was the king, and he was willing to pay off the debt for that ox.¹²¹

It is convenient to say that the man was reborn as an ox because of his karma incurred by denying his debt. Yet, there should be no problem in saying that this is a story illustrating the principle of *yinguo*: his repudiation of the debt is the cause, and being reborn as an ox is the effect.

Chen Xiaofang, 'Zhongguo chuantong baoyingguan yu fojiao guobaoguan de chayi ji wenhua genyuan' (*Shehui kexue yanjiu* 3 2004), pp. 67-69.

¹²⁰ See stories in the *Asheshi wang wen wuni jing*, *Shengjing*, *liudu jijing* etc.

¹²¹ *Shengjing*, T. 3, p. 98a-c; also quoted in the JLYX (T. 53, p. 248b) from *Piyu jing* (譬喻經). The present version of the *Piyu jing*, however, does not contain such a story.

In fact, in the early translations, stories that are used to teach a moral lesson are often told in the framework of cause and effect. Therefore, taking the concept of karma as a main part of the Buddhist moral causality can be justified in principle. Again, perhaps because the stories demonstrating *yinguo* are also actually designed to demonstrate *baoying*, there developed the term *yinguo baoying*, an Indo-Chinese hybrid term reflecting the similarity of moral beliefs between the Indians and the Chinese. In fact, they are so similar that not long after Buddhism's arrival, people tended to ascribe *baoying* to Buddhism, even when they were actually talking about the Chinese traditional *baoying*.¹²² In the rest of the chapter, we will use *baoying* to represent the newly combined belief.

3. The Integration of Chinese and Buddhist Moral Values

Before we discuss the integration of Chinese and Indian moral beliefs, it is worth outlining their similarities.¹²³ On a theoretical level, the Chinese *baoying* and the Buddhist *yinguo* resemble each other in two respects. First, they both hold that there are consequences (reward or punishment) for good and bad deeds, and that normally the consequences are unavoidable. That being said, with the exception of *chengfu*, the results of the deeds will fall on the doer himself.¹²⁴ Second, they are both ambiguous in on the one hand being equally determining as each other, yet on the other being subject to change by alternation in behaviour. Indeed, *chengfu* is different from karma in so far as the receiver of results is concerned, but it is also *chengfu* that supplements the Chinese *baoying* bringing it one step closer to karma by suggesting that the effect can survive many generations. Besides, the later developments of both beliefs allow the transference of merit for the sake of others.¹²⁵ Indeed there are some

¹²² NQS 54: 947. *Baoying* is regarded by Wei Shou to be one of the characteristic doctrines of Buddhism, WS 114: 3026

¹²³ For the social background in which Buddhism integrated into Chinese society, see Arthur F. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) pp. 11-20.

¹²⁴ This principle was first shown by a sentence quoted from the *Shu* (書) by Xun Kuang, which said that people bring sins by themselves (凡人自得罪) XZJJ (ZZJC vol. 2) junzi 17: 301. This was also believed by Liu Xiang who remarked 'disasters and blessings neither come from the ground nor from the sky, they are brought about by people themselves (禍福非從地中出, 非從天上來, 己自生之), SYSZ (tancong)16: 455.

¹²⁵ For a concise survey of the integration of Chinese and Indian cultures during the Six Dynasties, see Wright, Arthur F., 'Buddhism and Chinese Culture: Phases

obvious divergences between these two, but their similarities seem more fundamentally significant than their divergences. After all, as will become clear in the discussion below, what matters are their similarities.

As the above analysis of Buddhist moral causality shows, the integration of the Chinese and Buddhist moral beliefs had taken place in the process of translation,¹²⁶ although, together with the belief in rebirth, they were noticed by some Chinese as distinctive and strange.¹²⁷ The earliest example showing that Buddhist moral beliefs were conveniently interpreted through Chinese ones is said to have appeared in a conversation between the monk Kang Senghui and the ruler of the Wu kingdom, Sun Hao (孫皓 242-284). As Kang Senghui arrived in Wu, he was called to the court.

After Hui sat down, Hao asked, 'What Buddhism advocates is the retribution and response of the good and bad. What exactly is it?' Hui answered, 'wise rulers instruct the public with filial piety and kindness thereby the red crow flies and [the star of] the old man appears. [They] educate people with the virtue of kindness the sweet spring occurs and the auspicious plant grows.'¹²⁸ Since there are auspicious [signs] for goodness, then there should be [signs] for badness. Therefore, doing bad things in secret will result in being caught and punished by ghosts,¹²⁹ and doing bad things openly will result in being captured and punished by man. The *Yi* advocates that accumulating goodness has a surplus of blessings, and the *Shi* that sings in praise of seeking blessings should avoid improper

of Interaction' (*Journal of Asiatic Studies* 17, 1957), pp. 17-42; For the Chinese indigenous practice of transferring merits to the dead so that the dead would not get punished in the nether world in relation to the idea of *chengfu*, see Wu Rongzeng, 'Zhenmowen zhong suo jiandao de donghan daowu guanxi', p. 57.

¹²⁶ This incorporation and many other changes made to Indian thought in the process of translation are said to have been a common feature of the translations made before the Tang dynasty, and to be understood as having the purpose of making Buddhism suit the Chinese cultural taste. For a preliminary study on how some elements of Indian thought was transformed in the process of translation, see Hajime Nakamura, 'The Influence of Confucian ethics on the Chinese Translations of Buddhist Sutras' (*Sino-Indian Studies* 5:3-4, 1957), pp. 157-170.

¹²⁷ *Houhan ji jiaozhu*, 10: 276-77; HHS 88: 2921.

¹²⁸ Kang's answer was referring to the traditional Chinese belief that good ruling would attract reward from Heaven which showed auspicious omens.

¹²⁹ This remark seems to have been taken from the *Zhuangzi* (ZZJC, vol. 3) *zapiangengsanchu* 23: 345.

channels.¹³⁰ They are aphorisms of Confucian texts, but also the wise words of Buddhism'. Hao says, 'if it is so, Duke Zhou and Confucius have already made it clear, why need Buddhism?' Hui says, 'the words of Zhou and Confucius are briefly to show the obvious tracks. As for the Buddha's teaching, what it deals with is remote and subtle. Thus [it advocates that] doing bad things, there will be long-time suffering in hell, while doing good things there will be eternal joy in Heaven. Isn't it great to make the affair of encouraging [the good] and warning (the bad) clearer with these [teachings]?'¹³¹

會既坐，皓問曰：‘佛教所明，善惡報應。何者是耶’？會對曰：‘夫明主以孝慈訓世，則赤鳥翔而老人見；仁德育物，則醴泉涌而嘉苗出。善既有瑞，惡亦如之：故為惡於隱，鬼得而誅之，為惡於顯，人得而誅之。易稱“積善餘慶”，詩詠“求福不回”。雖儒典之格言，即佛教之明訓’。皓曰：‘若然，則周孔已明，何用佛教’？會曰：‘周孔所言，略示近跡。至於釋教，則備極幽微。故行惡則有地獄長苦，修善則有天宮永樂。舉茲以明勸沮，不亦大哉’？

Three points about the above passage need to be clarified. Firstly, from the purport of the ruler's question, it would seem that to someone like Sun Hao who did not properly know Buddhism it was just preaching the principle of *shan-e baoying*. As for Kang, he seems to have believed that there were Chinese beliefs equivalent to the Buddhist *baoying*. This equalization of Buddhism and Chinese indigenous culture, particularly Confucians thought, seemed to have been repeated by later scholars like Shen Yue, who even believed that the Chinese sages not only preached *baoying*, equivalent to the Buddhist doctrine of cause-effect, but also held the theory of three-lives (三世 the past, present and future).¹³² Yan Zhitui, while accepting the Buddhist idea of three-lives, even went so far to say that *baoying* for good or bad deeds was common to all schools of Chinese

¹³⁰ These two quotations were shortened from the 積善之家，必有餘慶 of the *Yijing* and the 豈弟君子，求福不回 of the *Shijing* respectively. For the former, see our earlier discussion above, for the latter which was also quoted in the *GY* (zhouyuB: 84), see the *SJJZ* (daya-hanyu) p. 384.

¹³¹ *CSZJ*, T. 55, p. 96c; *GSZ*, T. 50, p. 325c; *LDSBJ*, T. 49, p. 59c.

¹³² See his *Junsheng lun* (均聖論) in the *GHMJ*, T. 52, pp. 121c-122a. This has been regarded by Wang Yueqing as a matching point between the indigenous Chinese thought and Buddhism. Wang, as a Marxist cultural worker, is also of the opinion that the teaching of three-lives is more fraudulent than the moral beliefs of both Confucians and Daoists. That is to say that all the moral teachings are basically deceptive, and that the Buddhist one works better than the Chinese. See his, 'Zhongguo fojiao shan-e baoying lun chutan' (*Nanjing daxue xuebao* 1, 1998), pp. 61-64.

thought.¹³³ Holding the same view, Xu Tongqing (徐同卿 fl. late 6th cent.), the rector of the Imperial Academy in the Sui dynasty, composed a work named *Tongming lun* (通命論, ‘treatise reconciling [theories of] fate’) in which he said that in Confucianism there were ideas of three lives and cause-effect, but that their meanings were too profound to understand. Therefore he collected stories from classics and histories as a way of illustrating them.¹³⁴

Secondly, according to the *Chu sanzang jiji* and other sources, the reason why Kang Senghui selected *baoying* to preach was because Sun Hao was too brutal and coarse to understand the profound teaching of Buddhism.¹³⁵ This indeed can be backed up by the *Liudu jijing*—Kang’s only translation,¹³⁶ in which, the idea of moral cause and effect was repeated in almost every story.

Thirdly, in Kang’s mind, *baoying* was more explicitly expressed in Buddhism than in Chinese thought.¹³⁷ The reason for its being so was believed by another monk named Kang Fasui (康法遂 fl. early part of the 4th cent.) to be that there were story collections in Buddhism, such as the Avadāna, especially intended to help people understand the workings of *baoying*.¹³⁸ In fact, most of the stories, if not all, in Kang’s *Liudu jijing*

¹³³ *Yanshi jiaxun*, quoted in the GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 107b, 108a-b. For other believers of this view, see HMJ, T. 52, p. 66a,

¹³⁴ LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 107a.

¹³⁵ T. 55, p. 97a; GSZ, T. 50, p. 326a; LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 60a.

¹³⁶ Kang’s proficiency in written Chinese is also shown in his prefaces to a few translations made by earlier translators. E.g. the *Da anban shouyi jing xu*, T. 15, p. 163a-c, T. 55, pp. 42c-43c; *Fajing jing xu* (法鏡經序), T. 55, p. 46b-c. The CSZJ (T. 55, p. 92b) also mentions that Kang composed another work which seems to have been lost. The reason his translation reads so Chinese may have been due to the fact that he grew up in a Chinese territory called Jiaozhi (交趾), CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 96b. A new study has confirmed Sengyou’s record that the *Liudu jijing* was the only extant translation made by Kang Senghui. See Yu Xiaorong & Cao Guangshun, ‘Cong yuyanshang kan *Liudu jijing* yu *Jiu zapiyu jing* de yizhe wenti’ (*Guhanyu yanjiu* 2, 1998), pp. 4-7. Yet, another thorough study shows that the last few chapters of the translation were originally independently transmitted texts which were translated by others or written by Kang Senghui himself. See Shi Tianchang, ‘*Liudu jijing* yanjiu’ (*Zhonghua foxue yanjiu*, 2, 1998), pp. 83-93.

¹³⁷ The belief in *zuifu baoying* is the most frequently emphasised item in his LDJJ (T. 3, pp. 11b-c, 18b, 19a, 24a, 24b, 31c, 35b, 49b, 51c, 52a). In a Han translation this belief is referred to as ‘rebirth’, see *Zhong benqi jing*, T. 4, p. 161a.

¹³⁸ See his preface to his abridged translation of the *Piyu jing*, CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 68c.

seem to be used partly for the purpose of conveying this belief. This method is one of the strong points of Buddhist propaganda and might have inspired the Buddhist Sun Chuo (孫綽, ca.339-397) who in his *Daoxian lun* (道賢論, 'on the sages who seek the Dao') compares Kang Senghui with one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove (竹林七賢) of the Wei and Jin dynasties.¹³⁹ Sun's *Yudao lun* (喻道論, 'treatise of clarifying the Dao') demonstrates the reality of *baoying* by referring to some historical events during the Spring-Autumn and Warring States periods.¹⁴⁰ Yet, the first Chinese who acknowledged this strong point was Zhou Daozu (i.e. Zhou Xuzhi, mentioned in chapter one). In a response to others' attacks on Buddhism, he said that 'although [I] have thoroughly browsed through the Six Classics, [I have found] that the deeper I read, the more stumbling blocks I encountered. When [I] saw the sūtras and their teachings, [the six classics] started to make sense [to me] 雖周覽六籍, 逾深其滯。及睹經教, 始昭然有歸'.¹⁴¹ In other words, while the Chinese had either the theories or beliefs lacking stories to illustrate them, the Buddhists provided both beliefs plus illustrative stories. This very point was also maintained by an extremely pious Buddhist monk, Dao-an (道安 fl. 570) who shared his name with the eminent Dao-an of the Eastern Jin dynasty. He seems to be the first Buddhist to directly point out the defect in the traditional Chinese *baoying*. He cited most of the historical events used by anti-*baoying* persons to disprove the validity of *baoying*, and said that had there been no Buddha's teaching, none of those events could have been explained. He specifically broke down the details of the cause-effect relationship in three-life context.¹⁴² That is to say, that according to him, the Buddhist idea of life continuity offered a supplementary explanation to the traditional Chinese concept of *baoying*.

¹³⁹ The *Daoxian lun* appears to have been lost, but many parts of it were quoted in other works. For reference to Kang, see the GSZ, T. 50, p. 326b. For the latest study of Sun Chuo see Zhao Li, 'Su Chuo Yanjiu [孫綽研究]', Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Zhenzhou, 2007.

¹⁴⁰ See HMJ, T. 52, p. 16c. For a study on Sun Chuo and a translation of this treatise, see Arthur E. Link & Tim Lee, 'Sun Ch'o's 孫綽 Yü-tao-lun 喻道論: A Clarification of the Way' (*Monumenta Serica*, 25, 1966), pp. 169-96.

¹⁴¹ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 222c.

¹⁴² See his *Erjiao lun* (二教論) in GHMJ, T. 52, p. 142b. Dao-an was one of those who presented dissenting memorials to the emperor of the Northern Zhou, when the latter had decided to destroy Buddhism.

Furthermore, this strong point may have been one of the factors winning *baoying* an important place on the Buddhist monks' propaganda list during the Six Dynasties. It is said that it was the habit of the hermit monk Huiyuan (慧遠 334-416) to always preach the *sanshi yinguo* before a religious banquet.¹⁴³ Another obvious example was a monk named Daohan (道含) who was said to have once been preaching to He Chengtian (何承天 370-447) while the latter asked him to stay over at his house.¹⁴⁴ Again, another monk of the Qi dynasty was said to have engaged himself in doing meritorious deeds and always advised people to follow suit, because he believed in *baoying*.¹⁴⁵ However, the most interesting example is the monk, Sengjin (僧瑾 d.c. 475). The *Gaoseng zhuan* tells that he was invited by Emperor Ming of the Liu Song dynasty to be his preceptor. Emperor Ming was said to have been quite cruel, but due to his bad temper and sense of supremacy no one could admonish him. Official Zhou Yong was then his personal attendant. Zhou was a close associate of Sengjin. Thus, Sengjin suggested to him:¹⁴⁶

What His Majesty has been doing recently is not the act of a human ruler at all. Admonishing [him] with secular events will be of no use any more, wonderful theory and profound discourse will do so very slowly. Only the suffering retribution of three lives is the most effective [solution] for the situation. [You] perhaps should wait till the right moment and explain it [to him]

陛下比日所行殊非人君舉動。俗事諷諫無所復益，妙理深談彌為奢緩，唯三世苦報最切近情。檀越儻因機候正當陳此而已。

The text goes on to say that in the last few years of his life, the emperor's temper got worse. When he was ill, he asked officials in his palace including Zhou Yong to tell him stories of strange things which included ghosts and spirits. Every time after hearing them, he always asked 'if *baoying* is really like this, how can we not fear (報應真當如此，亦寧可不畏)?' As a result, he ordered the pardon and release of prisoners.¹⁴⁷

The power of Buddhist *baoying* stories seems more influential when they are depicted in sculptures and paintings in the temples. One depiction

¹⁴³ GSZ, T. 50, p. 417c.

¹⁴⁴ HMJ, T. 52, p. 20a.

¹⁴⁵ GSZ, T. 50, p. 416c.

¹⁴⁶ GSZ, T. 50, p. 373c. Also in NQS 41: 730.

¹⁴⁷ GSZ, T. 50, pp. 373c-374a.

was said to have been so vivid and scary that it was the reason that the devout monk Jing-ai (靜藹 533-578) became a monk.¹⁴⁸

Yet, in reaching this popular acceptance, *baoying* also encountered some objections. These objections are only one aspect of the anti-Buddhist debates which took place during that long and chaotic period.¹⁴⁹ The most serious accusation against those Buddhists who preached *baoying* or rebirth was the slander that the doctrines were deceiving people and therefore to preach them was considered a serious crime against society.¹⁵⁰ Apart from this extreme position, other objections were basically theoretical. At the start, those who opposed the idea of *baoying*, which by then had been regarded as belonging to Buddhist teaching, were virtually repeating the points made against the Chinese traditional belief of *baoying*. Among those who did not accept *baoying* was the Buddhist recluse, Dai Kui (戴逵 330-395). In his *Shiyi lun* (釋疑論 ‘treatise of explaining doubts’), Dai questions the credibility of *baoying* with those historical events cited earlier.¹⁵¹ With the ups and downs of his official career, he seemed to have accepted Wang Chong’s fatalism and believed that individuals’ fates were inevitably varied. As they were predetermined before their births, doing good or bad deeds could not change their fates at all. Therefore, he regarded the function of *baoying* as being just for the purpose of edification.¹⁵² He sent his treatise to several of his friends, including Huiyuan, who asked his lay follower Zhou Daozu to respond.¹⁵³ In his reply, Zhou likened the Chinese *tianwang* (天網, ‘net of Heaven’) to the law of *baoying* from Heaven. Not convinced, Dai wrote another piece confronting Zhou’s view. But their debates appear to have ended when Huiyuan sent his *Sanbaolun* (三報論 ‘treatise on the three types of retribution’) to Dai.¹⁵⁴ Before writing the *Sanbao lun*, a systematic work

¹⁴⁸ XGSZ, T. 50, p. 625c.

¹⁴⁹ As a subject of debate, *baoying* occurs in the HMJ, T. 52, p. 95a and the *Yanshi jiaxun*, GHMJ, T. 52, p. 107b-c.

¹⁵⁰ HMJ, T. 52, p. 35b.

¹⁵¹ Most of those historical events cited as anti-*baoying* materials were later answered in Zong Bing’s *Mingfo lun* (明佛論), HMJ, T. 52, p. 14c.

¹⁵² GHMJ, T. 52, p. 222a-b.

¹⁵³ T. 52, p. 222b-c.

¹⁵⁴ T. 52, pp. 223a-24a. In her brief sketch of the Chinese and Indian *baoying*, Chen Xiaofang suspects that there was originally in Buddhism the belief in present-life retribution, because she thinks it is against the idea of Buddhist basic teachings such as ‘four noble truths’ and ‘the twelve links of cause and effect’. See her ‘Fojiao guobaoguan yu chuantong baoyingguan de ronghe’ (*Yunnan shehui*

on *baoying*, Huiyuan, at the request of general Huan Xuan (桓玄 369-404), had written an essay called *Ming baoying lun* (明報應論, treatise of expounding *baoying*).¹⁵⁵

Dai does not seem to have been alone in denying *baoying* and believing in fatalism. A lay follower of Huiyuan named Lei Cizong (雷次宗 386-448) in his letter to his nephew also revealed that conviction.¹⁵⁶ His belief was followed by Gu Jizhi (顧覲之 392-467), who composed an essay entitled 'on fatalism' (命定論). He even quoted Confucius' words to support his views.¹⁵⁷ So did Zhu Shiqing (朱世卿 fl. 6th cent.) who believed that to be prosperous or unfortunate, and to die or to live were (due to) a naturally fixed fate. Even sages and the kind ones could not avoid this by [any action of] their own (故榮落死生自然定分, 若聖與仁不能自免).¹⁵⁸

Like Dai, Tao Yuanming also particularly doubted *baoying*. In his two poems, Tao calls the teaching of *baoying* 'empty words'. His examples were Bo Yi and Yan Hui, both of whom had been already used in Sima Qian's arguments.¹⁵⁹

kexue, 1, 2004), p. 92. This is a certainly mistaken judgment, for no one can draw such a conclusion simply because he cannot find the meaning of *xianbao* in these two basic doctrines.

¹⁵⁵ HMJ, T. 52, pp. 33b-34c.

¹⁵⁶ SS 93: 2293.

¹⁵⁷ The remarks he quoted allegedly from Confucius are 'the spread and disappearance of the Way are both [down to] fate/[Heaven's] decree' (道之將行, 命也; 道之將廢, 命也), and 'what Heaven supports cannot be destroyed, what Heaven destroys cannot be rescued' (天之所支不可壞, 天之所壞不可支) SS 81: 2081. These remarks are not in the transmitted *Lunyu*. As Graham observed, this is also the case for another two early important works of Confucians, the *Mencius* and the *Xunzi*; most of the former's and all of the latter's quotations of Confucius' sayings cannot be found in the present *Lunyu*. Therefore, it may have been like what Graham suggested that there were different versions of Confucius' sayings circulated in different branches of the Confucian school. See his *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 254c-256a.

¹⁵⁹ See the second poem of the *Yinjiu ershi shou* (飲酒二十首) and the *Gan shi buyu fu* (感士不遇賦), *Tao Yuanming ji* (Dai Qinli ed., Xianggang: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 87, 148. Tao had other two pieces entitled *Wange shi* (挽歌詩)

Dai and Tao's objection to the efficacy of *baoying* was also shared by a Buddhist monk called Huilin (慧琳 fl.ca. 423) who composed the *Baihei lun* (白黑論 'treatise on the white and the black') in favour of 'the white' (confucianism) over 'the black' (Buddhism).¹⁶⁰ Huilin's idea was supported by He Chengtian whose treatise entitled (報應問, 'questions about *baoying*') aimed to confront the idea of retribution and response for moral or immoral deeds. One interesting point he made was that if *baoying* were real, how could one explain the fact that 'geese get killed living only on grass, while swallows are favoured by people even though they eat worms (鵝食草被宰, 燕食蟲見愛)'.¹⁶¹ His questions were answered by Liu Shaofu (劉紹夫 i.e. 劉少府), Zong Bing, and Yan Yanzhi (顏延之 384-456).¹⁶² Furthermore, He Chengtian also denied the possibility of an afterlife by saying that the Duke of Zhou and Confucius both kept silent about these two points.¹⁶³ This created another debate between himself and Zong Bing (宗炳, 375-443).¹⁶⁴ This exact point of Confucius' silence on *baoying* was shared by another higher official Qiao Wang (譙王, i.e. 劉義宣 415-454) who even asked his subordinates to present their views on *baoying*. To his request, a certain Zhang Xinan (張新安) replied, 'loving beings to live leads to the start of three lives, and accumulating goodness generates the track of *baoying* (好生導三世之源, 積善啟報應之轍)'.¹⁶⁵ His 好生 and 積善 are no doubt shortened from and represent Chinese sages' '好生惡殺' and the old belief of '積善之家, 必有餘慶; 積不善之家, 必有餘殃' respectively. In other words, he was just repeating the

and *Ziji wen* (自祭文) both of which were influenced by the Buddhist idea of three-lives (*Tao Yuanming ji*, pp. 141-42; pp. 196-97). He was believed to have objected to Buddhism. Yet, the first poem was adapted conceptually from Buddhist texts, such as the *Fo banniepan jing* (T. 1, pp. 163b, 165b). The second part of this poem was a model on the *Xiuxing daodi jing* (修行道地經), T. 15, p. 184c. Tao actually made use of Buddhist terminology in his poems as much as he used the Daoist idea of transcendence. For a preliminary study on this, see He Jianping, 'Tao Yuanming de shige chuanguo yu Jinsong fojiao zhi guanxi' (*Pumen xuebao*, 15, 2003), pp. 201-232. Another Daoist figure who openly considered *sanshi* a part of Daoism was Lu Xiujing. See his hagiography in the *Daoxue zhuan* (道學傳) in Stephan Bumbacher P., *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 208-9.

¹⁶⁰ SS 97: 2389.

¹⁶¹ T. 52, p. 224a-b.

¹⁶² T. 52, pp. 224b-c, 69a-b

¹⁶³ '若果有來生報應, 周孔寧當緘默而無片言耶?' HMJ, T. 52, p. 19a.

¹⁶⁴ See their letters in HMJ, T. 52, pp. 17c-21c.

¹⁶⁵ HMJ, T. 52, p. 77a-b.

common understanding that the Buddhist beliefs in *baoying* and in an afterlife already existed in ancient Chinese thought.

The only difference between Dai's doubt and He's is that the former was taking the Chinese *baoying* to be Buddhist as well, but the latter only questioned the Buddhist *baoying*, particularly as relating to the killing of living beings and its consequences. This certainly makes a clear distinction between the Buddhist from Chinese theories, since even in Chinese *baoying*, the killing of animals was never considered to be a morally bad deed. Apart from this, we found that Liu's reply made use of the Buddhist idea of remote retribution, i.e. the *bao* will certainly come, and the only difference is sooner or later. This could have been inspired by Huiyuan's *Sanbao lun*, if not directly by Buddhist texts. Whatever the case may be, resorting to this solution seems to have been intended to solve the practical difficulty in believing in *baoying* and the afterlife: that their enigmatic workings can be attested to no direct consequences credible to normal senses. This difficulty and its consequence (i.e. causing people to doubt the credibility of the teachings) are clearly reflected by an apparently popular story: a Buddhist monk was a close friend of a higher official named Wang Tanzhi (王坦之, 330-375). They both reckoned that the mechanism of *baoying* was so hard to understand that they promised each other that whoever died first should inform the other about *baoying*. It turned out the monk died before Wang and he went to Wang and told him that the *baoying* was real, encouraging him to work harder in practising Buddhism.¹⁶⁶ A slightly later story contained a similar message. Yao Xing (姚興r. 394-416) asked the well-respected foreign translator Kumārajīva about the doctrine of three lives, because he said that it could not be confirmed by the senses or the eyes. The latter replied affirmatively by quoting widely from Buddhist texts.¹⁶⁷

Another group who did not believe in *baoying* was led by Fan Zhen (范縝 ca. 450-510), who maintained an accidentalism which held that people's fate was purely accidental. Just as the seeds of a tree which are blown by the wind fall on soil of different quality, the rich are like the seed falling on fertile soil, the poor on barren ground.¹⁶⁸ His view was criticized by a group of officials and monks led by Emperor Wu of the Liang

¹⁶⁶ GSZ, T. 50, p. 349c; SSHJ 6: 46; JS 75: 1969.

¹⁶⁷ GHMJ, T. 52, pp. 228a-229a.

¹⁶⁸ See his *Shenmie lun* (神滅論). The central point of this work is to deny the existence of the afterlife. The text was included in LS 48: 664-70.

dynasty. Emperor Wu himself was certainly convinced of *baoying*, since he not only called upon his subjects to respond to Fan Zhen's opinion, but also officially issued an edict to one of his officials saying that 'one has to believe in retribution in the world' (世間果報，不可不信).¹⁶⁹

In addition to those mentioned above, there were many other treatises containing the debate over or interpretations of *baoying* and sometimes of the afterlife.¹⁷⁰ Although all these apologetic and propagandistic literature are considered to be poor in philosophical argument and literary quality,¹⁷¹ two tendencies stand out. Firstly, the Buddhist moral causality was consciously taken to be basically the same as the Chinese *baoying*. Secondly and perhaps more importantly, the aforementioned tendency also led to the development of the fatalist feature of karma, the central part of the Buddhist *baoying* belief. Buddhist karma in some early sources may escape the accusation of being fatalistic,¹⁷² but karma in Chinese translations and particularly in the Chinese understanding shows some features of determinism. This change no doubt was due partly to karma's later development before it reached China and partly to the process of being integrated into the Chinese *baoying* system.¹⁷³ These two tendencies show the possibility that in the course of integration the Chinese belief may have been dominant, i.e. while accepting the Indian belief that the Chinese Buddhists did not totally abandon their faith in their own indigenous beliefs, although the Buddhist belief in many lives rebirth was

¹⁶⁹ LS 36: 524. The official was Jiang Ge (江革, d. 535). He was a pious Buddhist, which the Emperor was not aware of.

¹⁷⁰ Based on the existing sources we know the following persons were involved in the debates: Bian Zhan (卞湛) wrote *Baoying lun* (報應論), discussing with Fan Bolun (范伯倫), CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 84c; Yuan Can (袁粲 420-477) composed a *Quyuan lun* (逵顏論) to confront Huitong (慧通 fl. ca. 464-478), GSZ, T. 50, p. 375a; after seeing Xie Hui (謝晦 390-426) having been miraculously punished for destroying a Buddhist temple, Famin (法愍 fl. 5th cent.) composed a *Xianyan lun* (顯驗論) to advocate that the working of cause and effect was real, GSZ, T. 50, p. 372b; Senghan (僧含 fl. 433) wrote a *Yebao lun* (業報論), GSZ, T. 50, p. 370b.

¹⁷¹ E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, vol. 1, p. 12.

¹⁷² Early Buddhists are said to have not maintained that the suffering or happiness of life was caused entirely by one's karma. See K. N. Jayatilleke, *Survival and Karma* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1969), p. 26.

¹⁷³ At least by the Liang dynasty, this transformation had been visible, since Shen Yue's understanding of karma, which was typical of his time, showed a strong tendency of determinism. See Mather, *The Poet Shen Yüeh*, p. 141. More evidence for this tendency can be seen in short-story collections of this period.

regarded by Chinese monks such as Dao-an as a solution to an old Chinese puzzle of why good people suffer and bad people live well.¹⁷⁴ Three examples may be worth mentioning in this regard. Huiyuan was a leading Buddhist monk of his time not only because his teacher was the famous Dao-an, but also because of his own vast knowledge of both traditional Chinese learning and of Buddhism, as well as his pious devotion to Buddhist practice. He certainly knew the difference between Buddhism's belief and that of the Chinese, but he still used the traditional *tianming* belief to explain Buddhist *baoying*. In his treatise of *Ming baoying lun*, he wrote 'once demerits are accumulated, catastrophe from Heaven will naturally come, while once sins are committed there will be punishment in hell. These are unavoidable fates and should not be doubted (惡積而天殃自至，罪成則地獄斯罰。此乃必然之數，無所容疑矣)'.¹⁷⁵ Instead of using retribution through karma, he ascribed the authority for punishment to Heaven. In the same way, as noted before, Zhou Daozu also chose *tianwang* over karma as the executor of *baoying*.

Huiyuan may not have been the only Buddhist monk who retained his faith in *tianming*. A story in the *Yuanhun zhi* says that the first emperor of the Liu Song dynasty, Liu Yu (劉裕 363-422), killed the abbot of the *Niumu* (牛牧) monastery, because the latter had taken his enemy's son as a monk. Then, the abbot warned him in a dream that he was unjustly killed and reported him to Heaven. So, therefore, Liu would not live long.¹⁷⁶ In this story, the dead monk believed that the ultimate justice was with Heaven but not through karma, which reflects one of *tianming* features noted previously. Of course, it could also be understood that it was not the monk who believed in Heaven's justice, but the author of the story, i.e. Yan Zhitui.

Indeed, Yan Zhitui deeply believed in *baoying* in both its Chinese and Buddhist traditions. This can be attested to by his own words, used to instruct his offspring. In a passage instructing his children in selecting

¹⁷⁴ His view can be easily overstated (see Mori, Mikisaburo, *Jōko yori kandai ni itaru seimeikan no tenkai*, pp. 332-334), since as has been discussed so far quite a few Chinese, including Buddhists, also continued to object the Buddhist *baoying* in the same way as some earlier Chinese objected to the Chinese *baoying*. Some of them also denied the idea of an afterlife. The notion of rebirth functions in a way to justify the existence of the principle of *baoying*. If *baoying* was not believable, what use could the notion of rebirth be?

¹⁷⁵ HMJ, T. 52, p. 33c.

¹⁷⁶ *Yuanhun zhi jiaozhu*, pp. 48-9.

neighbours, Yan says there are people who do not know that being rich and noble is down to the mandate of Heaven. They greedily select a daughter-in-law and then bully her. To these kinds of people, ghosts will take their fate away from them and record their faults. Therefore, he suggests that his children should not become neighbours with this sort of people.¹⁷⁷ In this passage, Yan made use of *tianming* as well as of the Daoist belief in divine record of merits and demerits. Again, in two other passages, Yan revealed that he also had faith in the Daoist *chengfu*, which is, as pointed out earlier, one major element of the Chinese *baoying* system. Yan instructed his children in Buddhist doctrines. He particularly advised them not to engage in killing, because ‘those who like killing will get retributational effects and [even] their children and grand children will [suffer] from misfortune and disaster (好殺之人，臨死報驗，子孫殃禍)’.¹⁷⁸ In another place, where he looks back on his life, Yan says that although he was born in wartime and lived for many years in the military, he was lucky enough to survive times of trouble. He attributes his luck to the benefit of the meritorious residue he inherited from his previous ancestors.¹⁷⁹

This mixture of foreign and vernacular beliefs, in fact, can be seen in many short-story collections written before Yan’s time. Although orthodox historians tried to avoid recording stories likely to be understood as propagating moralistic propaganda,¹⁸⁰ their books do occasionally contain some selections by the authors of short-story collections to demonstrate the belief in *baoying*. From a secular and rationalistic viewpoint, any story designed to convey the idea of *baoying* can be easily dismissed as folk tales. However, in their own right, these stories are just the material which can shed light on the moral values of Chinese society during a specific period, and furnish us with illustrations of the process by which Buddhist belief were absorbed into China. As we will see in these stories, as well as *tianming*, a few other elements of Chinese beliefs were incorporated into popular Buddhist beliefs.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ YSJXJJ 5: 373.

¹⁷⁸ YSJXJJ 5: 366; GHMJ, T. 52, p. 294a.

¹⁷⁹ YSJXJJ 7: 533.

¹⁸⁰ This perhaps was due to their faith in Confucius who ‘did not talk about anomalies, strength, rebellion, and spirit (子不語怪力亂神)’, LYZY (ZZJC vol.1) shu-er 8: 146.

¹⁸¹ Two stories in the MXJ show the impact of calculating lifespan on Buddhism. The two dead persons recovered from death were both Buddhists who recounted

A large number of such stories involve animals. In terms of theme, these stories can be classified under different categories. The remaining sections of this chapter select some of them to demonstrate how the belief in *baoying* is supposed to work in relation to the kind and ill treatments given by humans to animals. Although *baoying* in later Chinese Buddhist history was often understood as bad retribution, the *baoying* in the following stories illustrate the consequences of deeds involving both reward and retribution.

4. Recompense for Helping Animals

Kindness towards animals is a good deed that according to the principle of *baoying* bears a good consequence. This good consequence can be in the form of cosmic reward or gratitude shown by kindness to the receiver. When compared, the Chinese stories show only the latter consequence, whereas the Buddhist translations demonstrate both. In next few sections we will deal with the Chinese stories according to the theme of repayment. In doing this, we will also refer to the similar or partly similar Buddhist stories.

4.1. The Virtue of Gratitude in Chinese and Buddhist Texts

The Chinese emphasis on gratitude rather than on cosmic recompense is perhaps due to the importance and long history of the value of gratitude in Chinese thought. In Chinese, returning gratitude is expressed by the graph *bao* (報), which is exactly the same one as the *bao* ‘retribution’: one graph with multiple meanings. The concept of repayment perhaps came from the idea of reciprocity which was the commonest theme of early Chinese social institutions. *Bao*’s meaning of reciprocity is preserved in the *Liji* which says ‘in the highest antiquity they prized [simply conferring] good; in the time next to this... And what the rules of propriety value is that reciprocity. If I give a gift and nothing comes in return, that is contrary to propriety; if something comes to me, and I give nothing in return, that also is contrary to propriety’.¹⁸² This idea is certainly in accord with another passage of the same work. This passage says that ‘once gentlemen of the antiquity used the service of others, they would certainly repay them; inviting cats because they eat the field rats, inviting tigers because they eat

what happened to them and revealed that their lifespan had not been finished, FYZL, T. 53, pp. 316c-317a, 756c-757c.

¹⁸² LJJJ (quliA) 1: 11.

field hogs' (古之君子，使之必報之：迎貓，為其食田鼠也；迎虎，為其食田豚也).¹⁸³ An even earlier tradition is preserved in the *Zuozhuan* which quotes an archaic saying indicating that people should show gratitude towards some domestic animals for their hard-laboured services.¹⁸⁴ Another development of the term *bao* is related to the relationship between the ruler and his officials. That is to say that the officials are obliged to repay the rulers by service, for the latter provide the former with positions.¹⁸⁵

While stressing the importance of repaying favours, the Chinese also emphasized that one should not expect repayment for one's own favour given to others. The *Zhanguo ce* says that 'I should not forget the kindness given to me by others, I have to forget the kindness I give to others (人之有德於我也，不可忘也；吾有德於人也，不可不忘)'.¹⁸⁶

Gratitude is shown through remembering one's origins as well as returning favours. There is no strict difference between these two; in fact the former was often used to interpret the latter. Thus in the *Chuci* (楚辭 'songs of Chu') and other texts, *bao* is symbolized by the simile of the birds and the fox. It is said that no matter how far the birds fly away from their home, in the end they will return to it, and that before its death, the fox always sets its head towards the hill on which it was born.¹⁸⁷

The *Zuozhuan* is perhaps the earliest extant text recording of an example of repayment of gratitude. A story tells that in 594 BCE, Wei Wuzi (魏武子) in his death will to his son says that he should marry off the one of his wives that did not give birth to a single son. However, on his deathbed, he ordered his son to bury the wife alive. His son carried out the

¹⁸³ LJJJ (jiaotesheng) 25: 695.

¹⁸⁴ 'People of the past had the saying, "no one dare to make the decision of killing an old ox" (古人有言：殺老牛莫之敢屍)', CQZZ, chengong 17: 903.

¹⁸⁵ See the sixth chapter of Liu Xiang's *Shuoyuan*, the author illustrated this idea by referring to some events happened in the Chunqiu period.

¹⁸⁶ *Zhanguo ce* 25: 950. According to the *Jinlou zi* a similar phrase, i.e. 'offering [of help] to other should not be remembered, receiving offering [of kindness from] others should not be forgotten (施人慎勿念，受施慎勿忘)', was taken by Cui Yin (崔駰 d. 92), a higher official of the Eastern Han, as his family motto (JLZJZ jiezi 2: 87). Cui's biography is in the HHS 52: 1708-22.

¹⁸⁷ *Chuci jiaoshi* (Chu Tianshu ed., Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989) jiuzhang: 330; LJJJ (tangongA) 7: 183.

terms of the first will. In a battle, the son was saved by the wife's dead father who in the dream told the son that what he did was to thank him for not burying his daughter alive.¹⁸⁸

This returning of favours is called *bao-en* (報恩, 'returning kindness'). The concept of *bao-en* could be another notion shared by the Chinese and Indians. There are quite a number of Buddhist texts in Chinese translations maintaining the importance of gratitude.¹⁸⁹ The earliest translation advocating the value of *bao-en* is An Shigao's *Qichu sanguan jing* (佛說七處三觀經) which regards those who are giving and those who never forget being given to as two types of people who are exceptionally good.¹⁹⁰ Another translation also values the importance of gratitude.¹⁹¹ Among later translations supporting the same idea many focus on the greatness of parents' kindness.¹⁹² In order to emphasise the Mahāyāna principle, one text even hostilely slanders *shengwen* (聲聞, i.e. *śrāvaka*, 'the disciples of the Buddha who get enlightened through hearing and practising the Buddha's discourses') and *yuanjue* (緣覺, i.e. *pratyekabuddha*, 'a sort of Buddha who gets enlightened by contemplation on the doctrine of "dependent origination" and does not tend to preach to others') as ungrateful persons who definitely do not have a future in the great enlightenment—Buddhahood.¹⁹³ This view is linked with another metaphorical sense of *bao-en*, i.e. only the Bodhisattvas who practise wisdom are the true grateful children of the Buddha.¹⁹⁴

As a whole, the motif of animals returning gratitude in Buddhist translations is much less common than in Chinese sources. The Chinese stories existed long before the Buddhist ones were translated. Therefore, unless such a notion was orally transmitted to China, the Chinese stories

¹⁸⁸ CQZZ, xuangong 15: 764.

¹⁸⁹ FYZL lists a few such translations made during and after the fifth century (T. 53, pp. 67c-70c).

¹⁹⁰ T. 2, p. 881a.

¹⁹¹ *Banzhou sanmei jing*, T. 13, p. 915b.

¹⁹² *Shelifu wenjing*, T. 24, p. 902c; *Zhongyin jing* (中陰經), T. 12, p. 1059b; *Zengyi ahan jing*, T. 2, pp. 601a, 823a; *Foshuo bao-en fengpen jing* (佛說報恩奉盆經), T. 16, p. 780a; ZFNCJ, T. 17, pp. 359b, 376a, etc.

¹⁹³ *Da fangbian daji jing*, T. 13, p. 88a.

¹⁹⁴ *Daoxing banruo jing*, T. 8, p. 450b. For a study of gratitude in mahayan Buddhism, see Malcolm David Eckel, 'Gratitude to An Empty Savor: A Study of Gratitude in Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy', *History of religions*, 1985, pp. 57-73.

could only have been developed on their own. Besides, as explained above, the sense of gratitude reflected in the concept of ‘bao’ appeared in Chinese civilisation quite early. It was even absorbed into one of the Confucian ‘six virtues’, namely, the *yi* 義 ‘righteousness’. Thus, these stories can be understood as a tool for promoting such concepts of virtues.

4.2. Grateful Animals in Chinese Stories

Mencius said that every man had mercifulness in his heart.¹⁹⁵ That mercifulness may be the reason why people help animals which are in danger. Massive production of the stories about helping animals appeared in the *zhiguai* of the Six Dynasties, although they originated long before that time. Starting from the *Soushen ji*, many short-story collections contain such stories. For instance, most stories of the 20th chapter of the *Soushen ji* are about animals that return favours. All these stories can be interpreted in many ways: they can be seen as showing that animals also know what humans are supposed to know, that animals can turn into spirits and know the life of humans or that animals know the value of gratitude. Other than these extended interpretations, one usual explanation would seem to be that the authors use animals to convey moral values, which is exactly what the Buddhists did in most of their Jātaka stories. In the stories selected in this section, the particular emphasis is on the belief that being kind towards animals is a deed bringing reward.

There are many ways of helping endangered animals. Therefore, there are equally many ways of repaying that help. Based on the stories we have collected, four categories can be distinguished here and discussion is subsumed under these.

4.2. 1. Repaying Favour with Goods

Stories in this category are about how the people who kindly help animals are rewarded by the animals themselves by bringing them some precious goods. These stories can be grouped into two types, of which one is more symbolic than the other.

The earliest occurrence of a story about animals returning the favours of humans is a mystical one. Gao You (高誘, fl. 205-212), in his commentary on the *Huainan zi*, refers to a story which says that Marquis Sui (隋侯) of the Zhou period kindly nursed an injured snake and released

¹⁹⁵ MZZY (ZZJC vol. 1) gongsunchouA 3: 138.

it. Later, the snake brought him a pearl from a river in return for his kindness.¹⁹⁶ The story exists in an elaborated form in the *Soushen ji*, which also contains many stories of a similar type, and also appears in the *Shuijing zhu*.¹⁹⁷ In another story, one who helped an injured crane was subsequently repaid by the crane with a pearl.¹⁹⁸ Another story related to a Han official named Yang Bao (楊寶 fl.5 BCE-5 CE) who at nine years old rescued a yellow bird from an attack of ants. He cured the bird and released it. Later, the bird showed up as a child in a yellow dress, telling him that he was a messenger of the Queen Mother of the West on the way to Penglai (蓬萊) but had been attacked by a falcon before he fell onto the ground and was attacked by ants. The child left four white rings for Yang and told him that he would become an official of high rank.¹⁹⁹

Stories like these are rare in the Buddhist translations. Only two can be found, and they were both translated no earlier than the start of the fourth century. One story tells of a dragon girl who, after being rescued by a merchant, returned his favour by giving the merchant several bars of dragon-gold.²⁰⁰ The other is about a hunter who, instead of killing the goose trapped by his snare, released it. In return for his kindness, the goose, which turns out to be the king of five hundred geese, persuaded the human king to give many kinds of jewellery and gems to the hunter in reward for his kindness.²⁰¹ These two stories may be seen to carry two messages. One, they are used to emphasize the value of gratitude. Two, they convey the teaching of non-killing, just as do many other Buddhist stories. It is the first message which expresses the same purpose as the Chinese stories.

The second type of story is closer to real life. There are two types of these worth exploring. In one we are told that²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ HNHL lanmingxun 6: 198. The pearl was known as *houzhu* (侯珠) and mentioned in the *Zhanguo ce* (17: 583).

¹⁹⁷ SSJ 20: 238; *Shuijing zhu jiao* 31: 1007.

¹⁹⁸ SSJ 20: 237.

¹⁹⁹ SSJ 20: 238.

²⁰⁰ MHSL, T. 22, pp. 488c-9a.

²⁰¹ SSL, T. 23, pp. 263b-264a.

²⁰² SSJ 20: 237. Except for some changes, the translation basically follows that of Kenneth De Woskin & J. I. Crump, Jr, *In Searcher of the Supernatural*, pp. 237-38.

Su Yi, a woman from Luling [today's Jizhou county of Jiangxi province], was good at being a midwife. One night she was suddenly taken away by a tiger. [The beast] carried her six or seven *li* [some miles] to a big crypt, where it laid her on the ground and sat on its haunches keeping guard. [There, Lu Yi] saw a female tiger in birth throes but unable to deliver. [The tigress] crawled about in agony and was near death; she stared up at [Su Yi]. Yi felt strange about it, and took out three cubs for her. [When] the deliverance finished, the tigress carried Yi back [to her house]. [The tigers] brought [her] game to her doorsteps a few times.

蘇易者，廬陵婦人，善看產，夜忽為虎所取。行六七里，至大礦，厝易置地，蹲而守。見有牡虎當產，不得解。匍匐欲死，則仰視。易怪之，乃為探出之，有三子。生畢，牡虎負易還。再三送野肉於門內。

Similar to the above is another story related to a historical figure named Guo Wen (郭文 fl. ca. 322). As a Daoist, Guo also believed in Buddhism and was taken by later generations to be an exemplary filial son.²⁰³ Known for being kind, Guo was said to be a vegetarian who lived on crops that he had grown himself. He also gave the excess grain to the poor. Once when a beast dropped a kill beside his hut, he asked somebody else to sell it. When the seller gave him the money he said 'if I needed it, I would've sold it myself. I asked you to do it simply because I do not need the money'. Another time,²⁰⁴

A beast of prey suddenly opened its mouth to Wen. Wen saw that there was a bone stuck inside. So, [he] stretched his hand into its mouth and took out the bone. The beast brought a deer to his hut the next morning.

有猛獸忽張口向文，文視其口中有橫骨，乃以手探去之。猛獸明旦致一鹿於其室前。

This story is reminiscent of two Jātaka stories, used for different purposes. Here, we retell one. The story's characters were a sparrow and a tiger which were previous births of the Buddha and his cousin Devadatta. The story is mainly to convey the doctrine of loving-kindness. It says that²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Zong Bing, for instance, listed him together with other eminent figures before his time, HMJ, T. 52, pp. 14b, 18c, 69b, 71c; also see GSZ, T. 50, p. 367c,

²⁰⁴ The story about him can be found in his biography in JS 94: 2440-41. The part of helping the wild beast has also been discussed. See Charles E. Hammond, 'The Righteous Tiger and the Grateful Lion' (*Monumenta Serica*, 43, 1996), p. 195.

²⁰⁵ LDJJ, T. 3, p. 29b-c.

in the past, the Bodhisattva²⁰⁶ was a sparrow king ... A tiger, which had a bone stuck between its teeth while eating a beast, was very ill and near to death. Having seen the way it was, the sparrow's heart was sad and thought to itself: 'Buddhas consider troubles coming from eating. This is certainly so'. [The sparrow] entered the mouth [of the tiger] and pecked the bone everyday. Not until its own mouth festered, and its body became skinny and ill was the bone taken out, and the tiger regained its comfort. The sparrow flew to a tree and uttered a Buddhist scripture: 'killing is brutal and cruel; no sin is as big as that. If others killed you, would you be happy? [You] should put yourself in others' shoes. Then, there would be kindness in you as nice as the spring. Kindness means "to be universally compassionate". Its response is like sounds and echoes; being brutal and cruel in harming others will get one caught, like the shadow chasing [the form]. You ought to consider my words'. Hearing this warning, the tiger flared up saying, 'You just left my mouth, but you dare to say that!' The sparrow, seeing the tiger could not be educated, flew away at once in sadness and sympathy.

昔者菩薩，身為雀王……有虎食獸，骨柱其齒，病困將終。雀睹其然，心為悲楚曰：‘諸佛以食為禍，其果然矣’。入口啄骨，日日若茲。雀口生瘡，身為瘦疵，骨出虎齧。雀飛登樹，說佛經曰：‘殺為兇虐，其惡莫大，若彼殺己豈悅之乎？當恕己度彼，即有春天之仁。仁者普慈，祐報響應；兇虐殘眾，禍尋影迫。爾思吾言矣！’虎聞雀誠，勃然患曰：‘爾始離吾口，而敢多言乎？’雀睹其不可化，愴然愍之，即速飛去。

Comparing this story with the one before, one can see that they are similar in removing a bone from the mouth of a beast. The Buddhist story was translated in the first part of the third century while the Chinese story appeared in the fourth century. It may be possible that the former served as a model for the latter. But in terms of the intended point, the former stresses unconditional compassion and *baoying* of being good or evil, whereas the latter shows that kind help even offered to animals will be rewarded.

4.2.2. Repayment in Service

The second way that the kindness-receiving animal repays the human helper is to give the latter roughly the same protection the animal received. At least four stories can be grouped under this theme, albeit one of which may fit in the first type as well. That story is about a peasant who was working in the field when he was taken to a deep forest by an elephant.

²⁰⁶ In Jātaka stories the term 'bodhisattva' refers only to the previous incarnation of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

The man saw a thorn stuck in one of the elephant's feet, and he helped to take it out. The injured elephant happily rejoined the others. Then the man was taken to a wet place. There, an elephant dug out an ivory which the elephant gave to the man and sent him back to his fields. Before the elephant left, the man told it that some elephants had been damaging his crops, and he would be grateful if the elephant could help him with that. Since then his crops were never troubled by elephants again.²⁰⁷

Another story is about a snake which resorted to revenge in order to repay its human helper's kindness. The story tells of an old woman who fed a small snake out of pity. When the snake grew bigger, it ate up the horse of the head of the county. Having known that the snake was responsible for the trouble, the head sent people to search for the snake in the old woman's house. Failing to find the snake, the head executed the woman. The snake then went crazy and vowed to avenge her. Later, the whole city except the old woman's house collapsed and was submerged into water.²⁰⁸

The final story worth presenting is one about a hunter. It is said that

in the times of Fu Jian (r.357-385), an archer passed by Mount Song where he saw a white bird, looking like a crane but bigger, in a pine tree. When he was under the tree, he also saw a snake about five *zhang* long going to catch the bird. The bird tried to fly. However, the snake caught it with its mouth in the last *zhang*. So, the bird could not fly away. The bird struggled for a while and became tired. The archer drew his bow and shot the snake three times. The snake fell down, and the bird flew to the side of the mountain which was a hundred steps away from the tree, tidying its feathers.

A while later, dark clouds drew over the sky and thunder started, shocking eyes and scaring ears. The archer was so frightened that he could not turn on his heels. [He] saw that the bird flew back and forth above him dropping feathers; it appeared that it was helping [him]. It went several times like this till the thunder quieted down and the lightning disappeared. The archer was saved, and the bird flew high and away.²⁰⁹

苻堅時，有射師經嵩山，望見松樹上有一隻百鳥，似鵠而大。至樹下，又見一蛇長五丈許，上樹取鳥。未至鳥一丈，鳥便欲飛，蛇張口歛之，鳥不得去。續紛一食頃，鳥轉欲困。射師引弓射三矢，蛇隕而鳥得颺。去樹百余步山邊整理毛羽。

²⁰⁷ YY 3: 17.

²⁰⁸ SSJ 20: 243.

²⁰⁹ YML, pp. 66-7.

須臾，雲晦雷發，驚耳駭目。射師懾，不得旋踵。見向鳥徘徊其上，毛落紛紛，似相救援。如是數陣，雷息電滅。射師得免，鳥亦高飛。

This story is rather ambiguous in meaning because the part where the bird helps the archer is not as clearly described as in the other stories. But the author's intended message of gratitude is clearly shown.

4.2.3. Returning Favours in Kind

The most popular story of grateful animals is one type in which animals return favour in almost the same way they receive it.

One particular example of returning favours in kind is the following. Surprisingly, it is about the gratitude shown by a kind of tiny animal, the ant. The story tells of a certain Dong Zhaozhi from Fuyang (富陽, now a county in the southwest of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province) county of Wu (吳) kingdom who was crossing the Qiantang River in a boat when

He saw an ant walking in great panic on a short piece of reed from one end to the other. Zhaozhi said, 'this is what is called being afraid of death'. [He] wanted to take [the ant] to the boat, but somebody in the boat reproved him saying, 'This is a poisonous stinging being and should not be encouraged. I would trample it'. Zhao had great compassion for the ant. He therefore tied the reed to the boat. When the boat drew into shore, the ant was out of danger. That night, [Dong] dreamed that a person in black followed by about a hundred others came to him and thanked him: 'I am the king of the ants. I fell into the river due to lack of caution, [but] was luckily rescued by you. If [you] are in any emergency and danger, let me know.' More than ten years later, a burglary took place where Zhao lived, and he was mistakenly taken as the prime culprit and jailed in Yuhang. Zhaozhi suddenly remembered [something] thinking that the ant king had told him to let him know in case of danger. Now where to tell? While he was pondering, one of his fellow inmates asked [him the reason]. Zhaozhi told him the truth. His inmate said, 'just pick two or three ants in your palm and speak to them.' Zhaozhi [did] as he was told. In the night, [he] really dreamed of the [same] black-dressed [person] telling him: 'you can go to the mountain Yuhang immediately, since the country is about to be in chaos, and soon an amnesty order [will be issued]. Thus, [he] woke up, and [some] ants had bitten the shackles and fetters open. As a result, [he] got

out of jail, passed the river and went into the mountain, Yuhang. Some time later, [he] was remitted.²¹⁰

中央見有一蟻，著一短蘆，走一頭迴復向一頭，甚惶懼。昭之曰：‘此畏死也’。欲取著船。船中人罵：‘此是毒螫物，不可長。我當踰殺之’。昭意甚憐此蟻，因以繩繫蘆著船。船至岸，蟻得出。其夜，夢一人烏衣，從百許人來謝云：‘僕是蟻中之王，不慎墮江，慚君濟活。若有急難，當見告語’。歷十餘年，時所在劫盜，昭之被橫錄為劫主，繫獄餘杭。昭之忽思：蟻王夢緩急當告。今何處告之？結念之際，同被禁者問之，昭之具以實告。其人曰：‘但取兩三蟻著掌中，語之’。昭之如其言。夜果夢烏衣云：‘可急投餘杭山中。天下既亂，設令不久也’。於是便覺。蟻嚙械已盡，因得出獄。過江，投餘杭山。旋遇赦，得免。

This story reminds us of an ant-rescuing story in Buddhism which is worth presenting here.

In the past, there was an arhant monk who had a novice. [He] knew the novice would definitely die in seven days. [He] gave him leave to return home and asked him to be back on the seventh day. The novice said goodbye to his teacher and went home. On the way, he saw many ants floating in the river, about to drown. [He] raised sympathy for them, took off his robes with which he carried soil to block the water, and fetched the ants to a high and dry place. Thus, they were all saved. On the seventh day, the novice returned to his teacher. His teacher was surprised to see him. [So] he entered meditation right away and saw through his eyes of divine power, knowing that the novice had no merit left, but because of the event of his rescuing the ants, [he] should not die even after seven days and his life was extended.²¹¹

昔者，有一羅漢道人，畜一沙彌。知此沙彌，卻後七日，必當命終。與假歸家，至七日頭，敕使還來。沙彌辭師，即便歸去。於其道中，見眾蟻子，隨水漂流，命將欲絕。生慈悲心，自脫袈裟，盛土堰水，而取蟻子，置高燥處，遂悉得活。至七日頭，還歸師所。師甚怪之。尋即入定，以天眼觀，知其更無餘福得爾，以救蟻子因緣之故，七日不死，得延命長。

²¹⁰ SSJ 20: 239-40. This story can also be found in the *Qixie ji, Lu Xun quanji*, vol. 8, p. 345-46. Another story that bears some similar marks to this one is in the SSJ 20: 241.

²¹¹ *Zabaozang jing*, T. 4, pp. 468c-469a. This translation has been suggested to be a Chinese compilation of Indian stories. See C. Willemen, ‘A Chinese Kṣudrakapiṭaka (T. IV. 203)’ (*Asiatische Studien*, 1, 1992), pp. 507-515.

Strictly speaking, this story is not the same type as the Chinese one we are dealing with, since the ants themselves did nothing in returning the novice's help. He only got a kind of good karmic recompense for his kind deed, which is good material to encourage *fangsheng* though, and which does not seem to have been popular till the Tang dynasty. Yet, these two stories have something in common in a broader way, and that is that both helpers benefited from their kindness towards ants: the former getting escape from the laws of the human world and the latter from his original fate.

Finally, a story that should be mentioned is the story of releasing a turtle. We have seen in the previous chapter that releasing animals can gain the releaser merits and other advantages. In this story, the releaser gets rescued. The story reads as follows:²¹²

During the Xiankang (335-342) period of the Jin, governor Mao Bao of Yu prefecture (an ancient division including some parts of today's Henan and Hubei provinces) guarded Zhu city. A soldier in the city of Wuchang (today's Wuchang in Hubei province) saw someone selling a young white turtle, four or five inches long and looking lovable. He bought it, brought it home, and kept it in an urn. It grew to nearly one foot in seven days. The soldier pitied it. So, he brought it to the riverside and released it into the water, watching it go. Later, Zhu city was stormed and captured by Shi Jilong²¹³, and Mao Bao abandoned Yu prefecture. People who entered the river all sank and drowned. The one who nursed the turtle also entered the river with his armour and sword. As soon as [he] entered the water, [he] felt he had landed on a stone; the water was as high as his waist. In an instant, [he] swam out of the middle of the current. [He] looked and only then realised that it was the white turtle he had released whose shell had grown to six or seven feet...

晉咸康中，豫州刺史毛寶戍郟城。有一軍人于武昌市見人賣一白龜子，長四五寸，潔白可愛，便買取持歸，著甕中養之。七日漸大，近欲尺許。其人憐之，持至江邊，放江水中，視其去。後郟城遭石季龍攻陷，毛寶棄豫州。赴江者，莫不沉溺。於所養龜人，被鎧持刀，亦同自投。既入水中，覺如墮一石上，水裁至腰。須臾，游出中流。視之，乃是先所放白龜，甲六七尺……

As noted in the previous chapter, releasing turtles is highly likely to be influenced by the Buddhist story of realising turtles. In that story, we have seen that the householder took pity on the turtle and released it. The story

²¹² SSJ 20: 239; SSHJ 10: 69; YML, p. 65.

²¹³ The capture of the city was recorded in the *Jinshu*, 106: 2769.

goes on to say that some time later, the turtle appeared at the front door of the householder and warned him of the coming flood. When the flood came, the turtle voluntarily helped to carry the family of the householder to safety. This is the last part of that story. It is clear that the above Chinese story follows the same pattern of the Buddhist one from the beginning to the end. Also similar is their edifying purpose: both of them are used to encourage people to practise *fangsheng*, and both of them show the gratitude of rescued animals.

4.2. 4. Showing gratitude in some other ways

The last feature of the stories of grateful animals concerns the manner of the animals. There are only a few of this type. Among them the following two deserve to be presented. The first story is mentioned in the *Weishu* and is about Pei Jun's (裴駿, d. 468) cousin Pei Anzu (裴安祖). He is said to have been very virtuous.²¹⁴

Once [he] travelled in hot weather and stopped under a tree, where [he saw] a bird of prey chasing a wild chicken. The chicken rushed towards him but ran into a tree trunk and passed out. Anzu pitied the chicken, picked it up, put it in a shady place, and gently nursed it back. The chicken was revived after quite a while. Anzu was happy and released it. Later that night, [he] dreamed about a man who dressed in silk robes with a round collar in quite an extraordinary manner and bowed towards Anzu twice. Anzu found this strange and asked him [why]. The man said, '[I am] grateful that you released me the other day, so I came to thank you'. People who heard [this] found it unusual.

曾行值天熱，舍於樹下。鷲鳥逐雉，雉急投之，遂觸樹而死。安祖愍之，乃取置陰地，徐徐護視，良久得蘇。安祖喜而放之。後夜忽夢一丈夫，衣冠甚偉，著綃衣曲領，向安祖再拜。安祖怪而問之。此人云：‘感君前日見放，故來謝德’。聞者異焉。

The next story concerns a Buddhist practitioner by the name of Wang Gu (王固 513-575). Once he was invited to a friend's house where a banquet was being prepared. He was said to have persuaded the host to spare the life of a goat, and the goat rushed before him and knelt down in gratitude.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ WS, 45: 1042.

²¹⁵ CS 21: 282; NS 23: 644.

The two stories above no doubt resulted from the influence of Buddhism, to be precise, the Chinese Buddhist practices of releasing animals and of vegetarianism.

In all the Chinese stories dealt with above, we see that animals seem to fit very naturally in the cosmos: they know what will happen in the human world, and most of all, they are able to appear as humans in humans' dreams—which do not seem to be found in any Buddhist stories, despite the contradiction that they were not even able to use their abilities to scare off their attackers thereby avoiding injury, which shows that the stories were created just to teach people moral lessons. While teaching one or two Buddhist doctrines, namely the Indian Buddhist doctrine of non-killing, these stories are more likely to be intended to emphasise the Chinese versions of those Indian doctrines and especially to stress the Chinese traditional value of gratitude. That means they are all intended to convey the belief in *baoying*, i.e. by doing good things one will definitely gain recompenses, regardless of the boundaries between humans and animals.

5. Retribution for Harming Animals

The above paragraphs show that recompense for being kind towards animals comes mainly from the kindness to receivers themselves. The next section will show retribution for unkindness towards animals normally coming from the cosmic law of *baoying*. There are a great number of stories in the Buddhist translations showing the motif of retribution for the ill treatment of animals. According to a number of texts, people who treat animals in a cruel way will suffer first in hell and then become animals or get other forms of retribution.²¹⁶ The strangest and most bizarre position is one that holds that men who do not have a male organ are so because they rode on castrated animals in their previous lives.²¹⁷ However, like the stories studied in the previous section, few Chinese stories can be classified as being entirely modelled on Buddhist examples. This is so for two reasons: first, before the earliest Buddhist translation was made in China, the Chinese had already the belief that the maltreatment of plants and animals and untimely killing of animals were liable to result in bad

²¹⁶ Special descriptions of sufferings can be found in two sūtras: *Foshuo zazang jing*, T. 17, pp. 557b-560b, *Egui baoying jing*, T. 17, pp. 560b-562b.

²¹⁷ *Foshuo zuoye baoying jiaohua diyu jing* (佛說罪業應報教化地獄經), T. 17, p. 451c. This translation was attributed to An Shigao, which is utterly not true on linguistic grounds.

requit on humans.²¹⁸ They also believed that wrongly slaughtering the six domestic animals would cause retribution on one's relatives.²¹⁹ Secondly, as discussed in section 1.1, the very notion of *baoying* did not come from India either. These two points will become clear through the discussion of the following stories.

The Chinese stories selected in the following discussions are grouped into four classes according to the manner of ill treatment given to the animals. In addition to these four, we will also briefly discuss another type of retribution which may be labelled in the loose sense as revenge from the harmed animals. Not all these classes have equivalents in the Buddhist translations, but all of them are used to convey the other aspect of the idea of *baoying*—doing bad things brings negative consequences.

5.1. Killing Animals

Killing is one major way of mistreating animals. We have shown that non-killing is a cardinal principle of Buddhism in that it helps the believer's religious practices. Here, a few words about killing and non-killing in relation to the Buddhist principle of *baoying* are in order. On the positive side, non-killing can bring one of five blessings: greatly increase one's lifespan, peace, freedom from the dangers of wars, beasts, and poisonous insects, being born into heaven, being reborn into the human world with longevity²²⁰ or that one's consciousness in the process of rebirth would never die untimely.²²¹ On the negative side, there are many descriptions of the cosmic consequences brought by killing (including torturing) animals. In this life, killing can drastically reduce the killer's lifespan as well as bring the five misfortunes that are opposite to the five blessings mentioned above.²²² Some texts also say that killing incurs the greatest demerit among all the sins that a person can commit. This causes the killer to be reborn in various suffering purgatories. Plus, after completion of suffering in hell, he will be reborn as a human being with a very short lifespan, one

²¹⁸ *Da-Dai Liji* SBCK 5/1b; LSCQJS (wutu) 4: 221, cf. Sterckx, ADEC, p. 145.

²¹⁹ *Da-Dai Liji*, SBCK, 5: 2a, cf. Sterckx, ADEC, p. 145.

²²⁰ *Foshuo fenbie shan-e suoqi jing* (佛說分別善惡所起經), T. 17, p. 517a. On non-killing increasing lifespan, see DZDL, T. 25, p. 312a. Such an idea reminds us of what Confucius said: 'the wise joy, the kind live a long life' (智者樂, 仁者壽).

²²¹ ZFNCJ, T. 17, p. 412c.

²²² *Foshuo shi-eryou jing* (佛說十二遊經), T. 4, p. 146b.

full of illness.²²³ This naturally follows, as another text has it, that any one who has a short lifespan or severe disabilities must have killed or hunted animals in his previous life or lives.²²⁴ The *Zazang jing* (雜藏經 ‘tripitaka of miscellaneous collections’) warns that people who kill and sacrifice a goat to *deva* (‘deity’) and then eat the goat’s meat will be constantly eaten up in hell by a dog.²²⁵ The *Egui baoying jing* (餓鬼報應經 ‘sūtra on retributions as hungry ghosts’) describes how killing and torturing animals cause ones suffering—killing shortens life even in hell, hunting with dogs showing no mercy towards living beings results in being beaten by a dog in hell.²²⁶ Again in the *Guiwen mulian jing* (鬼問目連經 ‘sūtra of a ghost asking Mulian’), very detailed descriptions about the retribution for killing living beings are given.²²⁷ In addition to the descriptions, many Buddhist stories also seem to serve the same purpose as their descriptions. Quite a few of the stories were created to warn that killing is the main cause for being reborn in hells and as animals.²²⁸

All these Buddhist texts and stories were the sources that influenced the Six Dynasties storywriters, and as in Buddhist literature, in the Chinese stories about retribution for killing animals, killing a goat is also a frequently recurring theme. This even became the subject matter for some wall paintings and sculptures.²²⁹ Yet, not all themes reflected by the Indian stories about bad karma of killing animals were made use of by the Chinese. For instance, the Indian belief that the karmic retribution of killing is no exception for enlightened ones cannot be found in Chinese

²²³ DZDL, T. 25, p. 155b-c; *Da sazhe Niqianzi suoshuo jing* (大薩遮尼乾子所說經 trsl. by Bodhiruchi 菩提留支 i.e. 菩提流支 d. 527), T. 9, p. 317a. For descriptions about the suffering in hell, see T. 4, p. 441a; T. 17, pp. 27b, 28a-c, 29a; T. 25, pp. 175c-176c, 27c-28a; T. 4, pp. 379a, 382a-383a, 405c, 441a.

²²⁴ T. 17, p. 517a.

²²⁵ T. 17, pp. 557c-8b. It is believed that this text and the *Egui baoying jing* are two translations of a text similar to the Pāli *Petavatthu*. See Wang Bangwei, “‘Zazang’ kao’ (*Guoxue yanjiu*, 2, 1994), p. 569.

²²⁶ T. 17, pp. 560b-562a.

²²⁷ T. 17, pp. 535b-6b.

²²⁸ For instance, see *San fadu lun* (三法度論), T.25, pp.15c-30a; ZFNCJ, T. 17, p. 180b;

²²⁹ One example is the relief made in 532 in the Northern Wei dynasty about a man who killed goats and was reborn into hell where he was punished. The sculpture is lost but the inscription was copied in modern works. For the content of the inscriptions, see Liu Shufen, ‘Wu zhi liu shiji Huabei xiangcun de fojiao xinyang’, p. 521.

stories of the Six Dynasties.²³⁰ In fact, the clear and direct influence from Buddhism is its doctrine of non-killing. This influence is shown in two ways: an imitation of the Indian theory of non-killing and the creation of vernacular stories to indicate the bad consequences of killing. For the former, we have a story telling of a man who after revived from a sudden death described how hunters, particular those who killed deer and geese, suffered in hell.²³¹ His description of the suffering in hells by and large was modelled on Buddhist texts such as the *Egui baoying jing* and the *Foshuo lunzhuan wudao zuifu baoying jing*. Again, another Chinese story particularly stresses that if people cannot stop killing totally, they at least should avoid killing oxen.²³² This no doubt resulted directly from the influence of the Buddhist teaching of non-killing. For the second way of influence, our sources are abundant and what is presented in the following paragraphs are only a few.

Many Chinese stories of retribution for killing animals are about hunting. The earliest story of this type is found in Cao Pi's (曹丕 187-226) *Lieyi Zhuan* (列異傳 'stories of arranged anomalies'), which does not seem to bear definite Buddhist influence apart from sharing the message of non-killing. In this work, a story tells of a hunter who specialised in hunting deer. Once he brought his son into a big mountain to hunt. The son saw the father suddenly falling down and turning into a white deer and running away. The son chased after it, but the deer soon ran out of his sight. After that, the son stopped being a hunter, but when his grandson grew up, the hunting business resumed. One day the grandson captured a white deer between whose horns he found a slip of paper on which were his grandfather's name and birthday. So, the grandson gave up hunting.²³³ This story clearly indicates the belief that there is *baoying* for killing animals, and the belief in transformation between sentient beings, either of which can be said to come from India.

The retribution for killing animals by someone who is not a hunter has some different features. One story would sufficiently illustrate this point. It is said that there was a scholarly gentleman whose surname was Zhou and who had three sons.

²³⁰ For an example story, see *Jiu zapiyu jing*, T. 4, p. 516a.

²³¹ See the two stories from the MXJ, quoted in the FYZL, T. 53, pp. 709a-b, 772b.

²³² MXJ in FYZL, T. 53, p. 978a.

²³³ LYZDWZ, p. 26. In another story the killer of a pregnant monkey turned into a tiger. See Zu Chongzhi's (祖冲之 429-500) *Shuyi ji* in LYZDWZ, p. 94.

[All the sons] were about twenty years old, but they all had only voices and could not speak. All of sudden, a guest passed by his house. While asking for a drink he heard the sons' voices. [He] asked, 'What is that sound?' 'They are [from] my sons. They all can't speak', he was told. The guest said, 'You may go back indoors and reflect on your faults. What caused this?' The host was surprised by his words and realised he was not an ordinary man. [The host] came out in quite a while saying, 'I can't recall that I have sins and faults'. The guest said, 'Try to think of the things of your childhood'. [The host] went in and came out in short while telling the guest, 'I recollected that when I was a child, there was a nest of swallow above my bed. There were three chicks in the nest. When their mother brought food to feed them, they all received it with their mouths. It went on like this for many days. [I] tried to put my fingers into the nest, the chicks also received them with their mouths. Thus I picked up three rose-thorns and gave them one each. Later, they all died. When the mother returned and could not find her chicks, she left crying sadly. I did this thing in the past. Now, I truly regret it'. Having heard [his] words, the guest's appearance changed into that of a monk²³⁴ and said, 'since you are aware of and regret it, your sins are gone'. Just as he finished his words, [they] heard the host's sons talking normally. Then suddenly, the monk was gone.²³⁵

年將弱冠，皆有聲無言。忽有一客從門過，因乞飲，聞其兒聲，問之曰：「此是何聲」？答曰：「是僕之子，皆不能言」。客曰：「君可還內省過，何以致此」？主人異其言，知非常人。良久出云：「都不憶有罪過」。客曰：「試更思幼時事」。如內，食頃，出語客曰：「記小兒時，當牀上有燕巢，中有三子，其母從外得食哺，三子皆出口受之。積日如此。試以指內巢中，燕雛亦出口承受。因取三薔薇，各與食之。既而皆死。母還，不見子，悲鳴而去。昔有此事，今實悔之」。客聞言，遂變為道人之容，曰：「君既自知悔，罪今出矣」。言訖便聞其子言語周正。忽不見此道人。

Two elements in this story indicate that it is aimed to convey more of the Chinese *baoying* than the Buddhist one. Firstly and most obviously, the belief that father's faults affected his sons is a clear mark of the Chinese

²³⁴ The term *daoren*, which appears in another story of the SSHJ (2: 12) as a Buddhist monk, could be 'a Daoist monk', although it was used to label the Buddhist monk since the 4th century at the latest. Both *daoshi* (道士) and *daoren* were originally associated with spiritual magicians as early as the fifth century BCE. For a brief discussion of this term, see Jao Tsong-yi, *Laozi Xiang-er zhu jiaozheng*, p. 57.

²³⁵ *Xuanyan ji*, in *Lu Xun quanji*, vol. 8, pp. 552-3; SSHJ 2: 11-12;

belief of *chengfu*.²³⁶ Secondly, the concept of *xingguo* which is the same as '*siguo*' (思過, 'reviewing mistakes') relating to disease seems to be a practice which was associated with one of the three main figures of the early Daoist movement, Zhang Lu (張魯, fl. 185-215).²³⁷ The Daoist nature and the close relation of these two elements may suggest that this story is rather more Daoist than Buddhist in origin, and that the term *daoren* was better taken as Daoist monk. Yet, the notion of retribution for killing animals does not seem to be generated in Daoism, because the *baoying* of *chengfu* did not extend to the treatment of animals until the wide spread of Buddhist animal stories in Chinese society.

Like this story but without the concept of *chengfu* is another one which tells of two brothers who were ill in bed and grew averse to the cries of the birds in their house. So, they killed them all. As a result of their deeds, they both got a serious chronic sickness.²³⁸

The most serious retribution for killing animals is death. One story tells of a man who entered a mountain and brought a young monkey home. The mother monkey followed him to his house, crying. The man tied the young monkey to a tree in his courtyard. The mother monkey bowed to him begging to let the young monkey go, but the man cruelly killed the young monkey. The mother monkey was so sad that she threw herself on the ground and also died. Half a year later, the man and all the members of his family died.²³⁹ Again, like the previous one, this story also shows signs of the Daoist nature since the retribution for killing the animal affected not only the killer himself but also his family members. Similar to this one are another two stories which also tell of two persons who killed a crocodile, and an elk died the next day.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ This belief in inheriting sin from parents' killing is also shown in another story, SSJ 3: 38. This again developed into a common saying which reads, 'the cause for king's disease is the leftover of his six [previous] generations (王病乃六世餘殃)', *Jinlou zi jiaoshi* 3: 112.

²³⁷ For primary references, see Jao Tsong-yi, *Laozi xiang-er zhu jiaozheng*, p. 4. In general terms, *siguo* seems to have been a Later Han Daoist practice of repenting of one's faults. See the biography of Lang Yi, HHS 30B: 1054.

²³⁸ *Xuanyan ji*, *Lu Xun quanji*, vol. 8, p. 553.

²³⁹ SSJ 20: 242. A different monkey story is found in the *Shishuo xinyu* 3B: 450.

²⁴⁰ YML, p. 94. SSJ 20: 242.

5.2. Eating Animal Meat

Cosmic retribution for eating animal meat was another major feature of edifying tales during the Six Dynasties. The reason for this appearance is, apart from the belief of *baoying*, that Buddhist vegetarianism developed and was formulated in this period. No story of this category can be dated back before the fourth century, when vegetarianism had not been a prevailing religious custom in society. In fact, the settings of most of the stories below suggest that they belong to a period when vegetarianism was firmly established as a Buddhist tradition. Since vegetarianism goes hand in hand with non-killing, some of these stories also involve the process of killing animals.

The first story to be dealt with is about eating mutton. It says that²⁴¹

When Wang Ke (fl. 6th) was an official of Yongjia commandery, someone gave [him] a goat. [He thus decided to] gather some guests and have a feast. The rope that tied the goat loosened, and the animal rushed towards a guest. It first knelt down and bowed twice, then hid under the guest's clothes. The guest actually said nothing, and as a matter of course, he did not rescue the animal. After a while, the goat was killed and roasted. The guest was the first one to eat. He put a piece of mutton into his mouth, but the meat entered his skin and moved around his whole body. It caused him to scream in extreme pain. When recovered from pain, he told this story. Thus, he died baaing like a goat.

王克為永嘉郡，有人餉羊。集賓欲譙，而羊繩解來投一客，先跪兩拜便入衣中。此客竟不言之，固無救請。須臾，宰羊為炙，先行至客。一臠入口便下皮內，周行遍體，痛楚號叫，方復說之。遂作羊鳴而死

Although this story was obviously employed to teach non-killing and vegetarianism, two of its concepts can be found in earlier Chinese sources. First, the description of the victim animal being scared of being killed can be traced to the *Zuozhuan*, in which an anecdotal description suggested that animals can feel frightened when they are about to be killed.²⁴² A similar view is found in the *Mengzi* which even suggests that people can see the terrified look in the eyes of the ox dragged to the sacrificial altar.²⁴³ Second, the part about people making an animal sound also has a

²⁴¹ *Yanshi jiaxun* in the GHMJ, T. 52, p. 294a. An extremely similar story is found in the *Soushen houji*, in which the meat eater is a Buddhist monk, SSHJ 9: 62.

²⁴² For cocks mutilating themselves to avoid being sacrificed, see CQZZ, zhaogong 22: 1434; GY (zhouyu C): 142-43.

²⁴³ MZZY (ZZJC, vol. 1) lianghuiwangA 1: 47-48.

precedent in an occult story of the later Han time. According to that story, a witch spread the idea that people who ate beef were bound to make a mooing sound at their time of death.²⁴⁴

One story similar in structure to the above is also included in Yan Zhitui's instruction to his children. That story has a different setting, in a Buddhist temple, and the person concerned was the head of a certain county. He temporarily stayed in a temple because his office building was burned up in a riot. He ordered a goat to be killed at a party. The goat rushed up in front of him and bowed for release. The host, instead of taking pity, laughed at it and had it killed. Having eaten the goat meat, the host became sick and eventually died of that disease.²⁴⁵

The short-story collections also contain stories about the retributions to those who eat other sorts of meat, such as beef.²⁴⁶ One interesting case says that a man of the Yuanjia period ate duck meat. He soon became sick and unable to eat anything. After a certain medical treatment, he vomited up a duckling.²⁴⁷

When the Buddhist vegetarianism became a prevailing custom, the consumption of eggs was also considered to be against the law of *baoying*. Yan Zhitui records a story of one who used eggs in hair care but later was bothered by the sounds of chicks in his hair.²⁴⁸ This consequence is at least not as dire as that in a Buddhist text which maintained that searching for eggs of a bird and boiling them to eat, or destroying eggs, would result in the state of being childless and alone.²⁴⁹

5.3. Injuring Animals

There are only three Chinese stories about retribution for injuring animals. Two of them clearly date after one similar Buddhist story. Therefore, the Buddhist story will be described first. In that story, the narrator was the

²⁴⁴ FSTYJS (guaishen) 9: 339; also see HHS, 41:1397.

²⁴⁵ GHMJ, T. 52, p. 294b.

²⁴⁶ YY 8: 84; T. 52, p. 294b.

²⁴⁷ YY 8: 84.

²⁴⁸ *Yanshi jiaxun* quoted in GHMJ, T. 52, p. 294a. The practice of using eggs as well as some parts of animals in beauty treatment can be dated back to the end of the third and the beginning of the second century BCE, see MHB, vol. 4, p. 102, but no one seems to have objected to the practice then.

²⁴⁹ *Foshuo zuiye yingbao jiaohua diyu jing*, T. 17, p. 452a.

Elder Youbo Juduo (Upagupta) who was the fourth generation disciple and believed to have received transmission of the Buddha's teaching.²⁵⁰ On a certain occasion, Upagupta was telling his pupils a story about a powerful king and his prince whose eyes were scratched out by others. At that point, his pupils asked what the past karma responsible for the prince's present misfortune was. The Elder then told them this story. In certain country there was a hunter who

in summer lived with others but went into mountains for hunting in winter. [When he] was going to the snow mountain, he met a hailstorm and [saw] five hundred deer entering a cave. He thought to himself, 'If I kill them all, the meat will go rotten. [I] should pick out their eyes and eat a deer a day'. Thus, he picked out the eyes of all five hundred deer. Because of this karma, [his] own eyes got picked out in this life.²⁵¹

夏住人間，冬入山獵。將向雪山，值天雹雨，有五百鹿共入一窟。作是念言：‘若都殺者，肉則臭爛，挑其眼出，日食一鹿’。即便挑取，五百鹿眼。以是業緣今被挑眼。

Stories like this one showing the perpetrator getting exactly what he himself did seem to be Indic in origin. Retributions for injuring and capturing animals are also described in the Buddhist texts. For instance, one reason for being shackled with fetters in jail and losing one's freedom is that in the previous life, one netted, encaged, or tied animals and let them go hungry. Similarly, a reason for being blind is that the blind previously encaged animals with their eyes blindfolded.²⁵² A group of five hundred bandits have their limbs cut off in this life because they cut off the four legs of a goat to make sacrifice.²⁵³ People suffering from severe skin ulcers and broken lips do so, because they angled fish and broke the lips of the fish in their previous lives.²⁵⁴

Apart from two small exceptions, most Chinese stories of this kind appeared no earlier than the seventh century. The first story is about an ancient bureaucrat who was fond of tomb robbery. One time he opened a

²⁵⁰ See the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of the *Ayuwang zhuan*, T. 50, pp. pp. 112b-118c.

²⁵¹ *Ayuwang zhuan*, T. 50, pp. 109c-110a. A slightly elaborate version of this story can be found in the *Fu fazang yinyuan zhuan* (付法藏因緣傳), T. 50, p. 309c.

²⁵² *Foshuo zuiye yingbao jiaohua diyu jing*, T. 17, p. 451a-c.

²⁵³ *Binaiye*, T. 24, pp. 892a-93a.

²⁵⁴ *Foshuo mayi jing*, T. 17, p. 532b; *Foshuo lunzhuan wudao zuifu baoying jing*, T. 17, pp. 563c. This is called (五道輪轉罪福報應經) in the CSZJJ, and is made by a unknown translator, T. 55, p. 30b

tomb and discovered a white fox. In the process of trying to capture it, his assistants injured one of the fox's legs. That night, the bureaucrat dreamed that an old white-bearded man complained about his injured leg, and knocked his leg with his staff. Since that night, he ended up with a sore on his leg, which was never cured even unto his death.²⁵⁵ The structure of this story seemed to have been copied by the author of the *Gaoseng zhuan* in which a story tells of a monk who broke one leg of a chicken and got one of his legs broken by others.²⁵⁶ Yet, unlike the fox story, this story is more Buddhistic, as the retribution came to the doer himself.

The retribution for injuring animals is not necessarily restricted to one pattern, i.e. when injuring one part of body, the doer receives an injury in exactly the same part of his body. The following Chinese story illustrates this point. It is about an eminent Buddhist monk named Sengqun (僧群).²⁵⁷ He was a vegetarian and a diligent practitioner of Buddhism. He lived on an isolated island where some immortals were said to have dwelt. He got his drinking water from a stone tank that stretched from his hut along a single-log bridge. One day,

he found a duck with a broken wing spread out, blocking the log. It pecked Qun, so he could never pass. [He] wanted to poke it aside with his cane, but was afraid of injuring it. So, he returned to [his hut]. With no water, he died in just a few days. Upon his last breath, he told someone that he had broken a wing of a duck while he was young, and that this (event) was immediate retribution (for that wrongdoing).²⁵⁸

忽見一折翅鴨，舒翼當梁，頭就啖群，永不得過。欲舉錫杖撥之，恐有傷損，因此迴。遂絕水，經數日死。臨死向人說，年少時曾折一鴨翅，驗此為現報。

In this story, the justice of *baoying* was served because the wrongdoer fully understood the law of *baoying* and was willing to accept the karmic consequence of his action. This is perhaps the most straightforward and plain story used solely to express the Buddhist *baoying*.

²⁵⁵ XJZJ, p. 42.

²⁵⁶ T. 50, p. 389a.

²⁵⁷ Sengqun must have lived before or around 404, in which the author of the story, Liu Jingshu (劉敬叔), was active.

²⁵⁸ YY 5: 50. A slightly elaborate version is included in the GSZ, T. 50, p. 404a. Unless there are some details missing, the creator of the story seems rather naïve: while stressing the idea of *baoying*, he forgot to consider one simple thing which is that if Sengqun was so kind to animals, he would have taken the bird into his care and thereby both he and the duck could have had a happy end.

5.4. Requiring Animals' Kindness with Enmity

Being grateful is virtuous. Being ungrateful and vicious is certainly wicked and is governed by the law of *baoying*. There are at least four Buddhist stories that can fit into this category of ungrateful wickedness. Among them, two were translated into Chinese in the early part of the third century at the latest. The two have roughly the same pattern as well as a double meaning: they both try to convey that there is retribution for the viciously ungrateful ones on the one hand, and contrasts the personalities of the Buddha and Devadatta on the other. At the end of each of the stories, the characters are identified: the kind and noble Bodhisattva animal had been one previous incarnation of the Buddha, the ungrateful, sometimes mean and vicious, human being had been the Devadatta in a previous life.

The theme of the first story is tolerance. Although the ungratefully beneficiary viciously killed the helper, the story ends by saying that the helper was the Buddha, and the wicked beneficiary Devadatta, but there is no message of *baoying* attached to it.²⁵⁹ The second story is quite a long one. It is in this story that for the first time in the Buddhist translations gratitude and ingratitude are discussed together. In the story, the Bodhisattva was a deer king who had an extraordinarily beautiful coat. One day the deer king saw a man struggling in a strongly flowing river. Out of compassion, the deer king risked its life jumping into the river and dragged the man out of the water with great difficulty and danger. The man told the deer king how grateful he was, and the deer king modestly preached to him about the benefit of gratefulness along with the dangerous retribution for the ungrateful. Before they parted, the deer king told the man that he was the first human to see him and asked the man not to tell anyone about his whereabouts. The man promised not to. Following the deer king's direction, the man returned home safely. However, he broke his promise by telling his king about the impressive coat of the deer king. Thus, the king was brought to the forest by the man. As soon as the man finished saying 'This is the deer king I mentioned to you,' his hands spontaneously fell off onto the ground.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ LDJJ, T. 3, p. 27b.

²⁶⁰ *Pusa benyuan jing*, T. 3, pp. 66c-68a. A similar story translated in the 3rd century is about a deer king, see LDJJ, T. 3, pp. 33a-b.

In the story the hand-falling is held to be in retribution for being ungrateful. This moral is also shared by a third story in which the characters are a bear and a man.²⁶¹

The fourth one is more important in the sense that it displays similarities to a Chinese story. It is about a group of merchants sailing on the sea. They met a severe storm, so they screamed to the gods for help. As it happened, a giant turtle was swimming nearby. The turtle carried them all to the beach and then fell asleep. One man from the group killed the turtle. Others criticized him and warned him that a disaster would happen to them because what he did was cruelly ungrateful. In the end, they all ate the turtle meat. That night, they were all trampled to death by a group of elephants.²⁶² This story may have been imitated by some Chinese miracle stories in which the endangered one's cries to Bodhisattva Guanyin (觀音, i.e. Avalokiteśvara, 'listening the sounds of the world') for help attract the appearance of animals which guided them out of danger.²⁶³

The above story has something in common with the following Chinese story which first appeared in a work of the early part of the fifth century. The story says that in the beginning of the Yuanjia period, the governor of Yi prefecture

sent three men to cut firewood on a mountain. [They] had lost their way. One of them saw a tortoise as big as a carriage wheel. This tortoise held a small tortoise on each of its four legs and was followed by about a hundred yellow tortoises. The three men bowed [to the tortoise] to beg it to show them a way out. The tortoise actually stretched its neck as if it to show them something. Therefore [the men] all followed it and eventually found a way out. One man, for no reason, took some small tortoises, and made them into dried meat. After eating the meat, he soon died suddenly. Only those who did not eat were safe and well.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ JLYX quoted from a lost collection called *Zhujiing zhong yaoji*, T. 53, p. 58c.

²⁶² *Zabaozang jing*, T. 4, p. 464b.

²⁶³ In Lu Gao's *Xi Guanyin yingyan ji* (系觀音應驗記), at least four stories are about humans being rescued through animals, see Sun Changwu ed., *Guanshiyin yingyan ji sanzong hejiao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), pp. 44, 48-49, 55-56, 63-64. These stories are miracle tales used to convey that anyone who is in danger and recites piously the name of Guanyin will get rescued. The animals in these stories are used only as minor aids in the rescue. So the stories cannot strictly be taken as animals helping people, therefore they are not treated in this study.

²⁶⁴ YY 3: 23. This story inspired the writing of another story in SSHJ (yiwen) 71.

益州刺史遣三人入山伐樵，路迷。或見一龜大如車輪，四足各攝一小龜而行，又有百余黃龜從其後。三人叩頭請示出路。龜乃申頭，若有意焉。因共隨逐，即得出路。一人無故取小龜，割以為脯。食之，須臾暴死。惟不啖者無恙。

Like the above Indian story, in this story, the animal was a turtle which, as has been pointed out on page 53, was considered a divine being by the early Chinese. Yet, the structure of the story seems to be a combination of the Indian turtle story and that of the deer king, which was presented above.

5.5. Revenge from Victim Animals

The last type of punishment for harming animals is revenge carried out by the victim animal itself. Since the Buddhist prime principle is loving-kindness, the so-called anti-revenge doctrine, it is opposed to the exercise of hatred in solving problems. Revenge is never an option.²⁶⁵ Instead, forgiveness and tolerance are advised. For those who are enlightened, once that knew that they owed their karmic debts to others, they voluntarily sought out those they have hurt and then allowed themselves to be avenged in order to end the perpetuation of violence between them and, most of all, to end the cycle of birth and death for themselves.²⁶⁶ After all, an avenging mind is as powerful as any heavy karma in causing those who hold to it to suffer the continuity of rebirth.²⁶⁷ This was demonstrated in the stories about Maudgalyāyana (目犍連) and the pupil of Nagārjuna (龍樹) who deliberately went back to their previous victims and allowed themselves to be killed in order to end the long-lasting hatred between them.²⁶⁸

Yet, this does not mean that there are no stories describing acts of revenge in Buddhist literature. In fact, in Chinese Buddhist translations, there are quite a few such accounts. One of them tells of a bird with three chicks which made a home for its family all in a tree next to a palace.

²⁶⁵ In the first section of the sayings of the Buddha's dharma, the Buddha was reported to have said that hatred could only be quenched by non-hatred. See K. R. Norman trsl., *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)* (Oxford: Pali Texts Society, 2000), 1: 5, p. 1.

²⁶⁶ This shows another side of the teaching of karma, i.e. the avenging circle between beings is due to more of hatred than of karma.

²⁶⁷ For instance, see a rebirth story in *Faju piyu jing*, T. 4, p. 582a-b.

²⁶⁸ T. 24, p. 863a; T. 50, p. 187c. Also see An Shigao's hagiography, T. 55, p. 95b.

Every day the mother bird flew to the Fragrant Mountain and collected a kind of sweet fruit for her chicks. Once one of these fruits dropped on the ground and was picked up by the gardener who presented it to the prince. Strongly attached to the fruit, the prince asked his father to provide him with more. The king, through love of his son, ordered the gardener to snatch that fruit from the nest several times. Overcome with anger, the mother bird deliberately substituted a poisonous fruit from which the prince died.²⁶⁹ There is no complicated structure in this story, but the moral is clear and straightforward—one should not treat anyone, including animals, unfairly or immorally.

Comparatively speaking, the Chinese stories describing vengeance outnumber and predate those of Indian origin, many of them are found in texts prior to the Six Dynasties.²⁷⁰ One particular feature of these stories is that people who were killed unjustly subsequently avenged their live enemies.²⁷¹ The stories can be classified into two types. In one, the revenge is done by friends or relatives of the dead victim, rather than by the victim himself. In the other, the victims themselves, normally shown as ghosts, take revenge on their enemies. It can be certain that these kinds of Chinese stories have no connection with the Indian ones transmitted through Buddhist texts.

The typical characteristic of the Chinese stories of animal's vengeance on humans differs from the Indian ones in two ways. First, the Chinese stories were less realistic than those originally from India—revenge was not actually done by the victim animal itself but resulted from the exercise of some divine power. Secondly, in the Chinese stories, animals were almost always depicted as having the power to appear as human beings in human dreams. Two stories will suffice to illustrate these features. Our first is about a hunter who attacked a sleeping snake. Three years later, the

²⁶⁹ DZDL, T. 25, p. 182a-b.

²⁷⁰ On avenging stories in early Chinese texts, see Cohen, Alvin P. 'Avenging Ghosts and Moral judgement in Ancient Chinese Historiography: Three Examples from Shih-chi', in Sarah Allan & Alvin P. Cohen eds., *Legend, Lore, and Religion in China: Essays in Honour of Wolfram Eberhard on His Seventieth Birthday*, (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1979), pp. 97-108. For a sixth century collection of early avenging ghost stories, see the *Yuanhun zhi*. For an English translation of this collection, see Cohen, Alvin P. trsl., *Tales of Vengeful Souls* (Taiwan: Institut Ricci), 1982.

²⁷¹ For instance, see the Du Bo's (杜伯) case in the MZXG (ZZJC, vol. 4) mingguiA 8: 139-40; FSTYJS (guaishen) 9: 345.

hunter related the incident when he returned to the same place, accompanied by a fellow hunter. That night he dreamed of a man in black who told him that he was asleep at the time of the attack and so did not see the hunter's face. He told the hunter that he now knew who he was and that the hunter would die. Not long after, the hunter did die of a violent stomachache.²⁷² The second story tells of a certain fish which was caught up in a fish trap. The fish then turned into a naked girl, unable to move in the trap. Some passing men subjected her to indecent assault. That night the trap setter was told in a dream that the fish would plead to the gods and the molesters would die. Those men soon died of sickness.²⁷³

As in the Indian story, these two tales were intended to warn people of the outcome of treating animals immorally. This underlying intention, however, was channelled into the service of explicitly spreading the Buddhist doctrine of non-killing. Yan Zhitui perhaps was the first writer to make such a transformation. A story in his *Yanshi jiaxun* can be taken as an example. It tells of a man who used to fish in a lake. Subsequently, when he was ill, he dreamed of a school of fish coming to bite him. Then, he died.²⁷⁴

6. Conclusion

The early Chinese and Indian Buddhists both believed that there was a moral law which was able to reward the good and punish the bad. The Chinese law was labelled '*baoying*', and its execution was ascribed to the power of a supreme god, while the Indian law, which can be conveniently referred to as karma or *yinguo*, was self-perpetuating. The Indian *yinguo* extended its validity over several lives of the one individual, in contrast to the Chinese *baoying* which basically cursed several generations of one family (including one life of the individual who violated it). Yet, both versions of the law shared the same purpose— to ethicise people's behaviour. It is this shared purpose that lead the Chinese to vigorously explore and transform the Indian version. This accordingly helped the development of a new hybrid principle generally also referred to as *baoying*.

²⁷² SSJ 20: 242-43.

²⁷³ *Zhiguai*, in the LYZDWZ, p. 43.

²⁷⁴ *Yanshi jiaxun*, quoted in GHMJ, T. 52, p. 294b.

Despite the overwhelming impression that the Chinese use their *baoying* to explain the events of the human and ghost worlds, our above discussion demonstrates that this law can be applied as well to the relationships between humans and animal beings. That is to say, on the one hand the nurturing of unfortunate animals out of kindness is explained and encouraged through *baoying*, and this is a feature of the system of Indian *yinguo*. In most Chinese stories as shown above, no such a belief as rebirth is employed—repaying and retribution take place within the same lifetime. On the other hand, focusing on the principle of non-killing, the Indian Buddhists do suggest that ill treatment given to animals, such as injuring them, will be punished according to *yinguo*. This will almost exclusively take effect through subsequent lives. As can be imagined, this Indian belief supplements the Chinese one, which holds that kindness towards animals should start with the prohibition against victimisation of animals and then end with voluntarily helping animals in need. This hypothesis is supported by the numerous Chinese stories portraying reward for helping animals and retribution for mistreating them. Although there appears to have been no stories that were directly designed to promote the benefits of avoiding eating meat, those that show retribution for eating meat probably served the same purpose, i.e. helping to spread vegetarianism. In the same way, some of the above stories, which convey the message that the nurturing and liberating of animals results in rewards, no doubt, serve to strengthen the promulgation of *fangsheng*. Therefore, these stories can not be seen just as inconsequential tales but as essential vehicles for documenting the processes by which the Buddhist practices treated in the previous two chapters were adopted in China.

CONCLUSION

The history of Chinese Buddhism, to rephrase Thomas H.C. Lee's comment on the history of traditional Chinese education, is a complex one, not only because it is a long history, but because it is a combination of foreign and indigenous beliefs and traditions.¹ The process of combination started when Buddhism entered China and continued through the end of the Song dynasty (宋朝 960-1279), by which time the flow of Buddhist influence from India stopped. This heterogeneous feature is reflected on every level of Chinese Buddhism. The view that the top level of Chinese Buddhism represented the Chinese form of Indian Buddhism is only superficially true.² For even in the elite Chinese Buddhists' understanding of Buddhism, which is reflected in the materials drawn on for this study, Chinese indigenous beliefs are also recognisable. Many Buddhist traditions, living and dead, developed as a result of this combination, three examples of which, all centred on the doctrine of kindness to animal beings, have been discussed in depth in this study.

Kindness towards animals in early Buddhism is shown through the rule of non-killing, but in light of practice, this rule is too general for the laity to apply in their daily life. Vegetarianism and the doctrine of *fangsheng* are two advanced forms of such kindness, which can be carried out in everyday life. These two actions are enforced theoretically by the belief in *baoying* or retribution, which supports the view that harming animals incurs negative consequences while caring for animals brings rewards, both karmic and realistic. Although as general advice, not to kill animals in an absolute sense was not an element of Chinese culture, vegetarian practice and *fangsheng* were not unfamiliar to the Chinese. The same is true for the belief in *baoying* which is a major concept of the ancient Chinese moral system. From a Buddhist perspective, logically speaking, no one would be advised to observe a vegetarian diet and to practise *fangsheng* before being asked to first stop killing animals. However, these two traditions existed in China for reasons separate from the principle of

¹ Thomas H.C. Lee, *Education in Traditional China: A History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 657.

² E. Zürcher, 'Perspective in the Study of Chinese Buddhism' (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2, 1982), p. 173.

non-killing. What this study has shown is how Indian and Chinese teachings and traditions that are similar in nature but different in purpose became a harmonious unity in the process of the acceptance of Buddhism by the Chinese.

Generally speaking, because this study is limited in scope to before the Tang dynasty, each of its subtopics has been discussed in full, at least hopefully, with exhaustive recourses to primary sources. Additionally, other hopefully fulfilled goals of this study are summarised below.

First, the rise of Buddhist vegetarian practice was formerly linked to the appearance of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine which is normally traced to the *Da banniepan jing*. As a result, the *Da banniepan jing* is often considered the main doctrinal source for Buddhist vegetarianism in both Indian and Chinese Buddhism. The survey of Buddhist vegetarianism carried out in the first chapter of this study suggests that we should no longer subscribe to this view. It should be clear that the doctrine of loving-kindness and compassion and the idea of rebirth were the two earliest reasons for the prohibition against eating meat. In practice, the Chinese Buddhists who followed a vegetarian diet did not do so because of what is said in the *Da banniepan jing*. This was not simply because the appearance of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism predates considerably the translation of the *Da banniepan jing*, but mainly because of the sinicization of the Buddhist *zhaijie*. In addition, as we have seen, even when the *Da banniepan jing* was popular, the reasons used to promote vegetarianism by three prominent supporters, Zhou Yong, Shen Yue and Emperor Wu of the Liang, did not seem to have included the *tathāgatagarbha* concern. Rather, they based their arguments on other grounds such as loving-kindness, compassion and rebirth.

Second, previous studies have touched upon the possibility that Chinese vegetarian practice may have been conducive to the acceptance of Buddhist vegetarianism, but the exact relation between indigenous practice and vegetarianism has not been properly dealt with. The first chapter shows that before early Chinese Buddhists began to pay attention to the pro-vegetarian teachings scattered in a few early Buddhist translations, traditional Chinese vegetarian practice had already been assimilated into Buddhist activity through the tradition of *zhaijie* found in both cultures. Only after vegetarianism became an explicit doctrine in many translations, did strictly Buddhist vegetarianism begin to be followed by the Chinese *sengren*.

Third, although Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty is the main subject of a number of studies, a general scholarly understanding of the emperor's Buddhist policy is unanimous in viewing his decisions as politically motivated. This study yields a different conclusion, even though we have also shown that there were economic concerns and some political pressures among the possible reasons the emperor legitimised vegetarianism. We have shown that the emperor's faith in vegetarianism was genuine and that his belief in vegetarianism was a combination of his own feelings of filial piety and his understanding of Buddhist loving-kindness. The scholarly tendency has been to ascribe every government effort in educating and guiding the masses of people to moral goodness as nothing but a politically utilitarian game. Indeed, using political power to legislate against *sengren* eating meat had political implications, but the action itself does not mean that the underlying intention and purpose were purely politically-oriented.

Fourth, unlike the common understanding shown by a few general studies that the custom of *fangsheng* started in the fifth century and that its canonical supporting material was the *Fanwang jing*, our second chapter provides another picture. The development of *fangsheng* as a practice is a genuine achievement of Chinese Buddhism. It benefited from a broad understanding of Chinese *ren* and a small number of animal-releasing anecdotes in early texts. The earliest Chinese record of *fangsheng* that had been influenced by a Buddhist text came from as late as the early fourth century when the custom of releasing doves was considered separate. In fact, the teaching and stories of liberating animals existed from as early as the early third century, which seriously challenges the received view that the spurious sutra, the *Fanwang jing*, is the theoretical origin for the development of animal releasing customs in Chinese Buddhism.

Fifth, the third chapter of this study advances our knowledge of the integration of Chinese and Buddhist moral beliefs by analysing the similar features of these two systems and by providing examples from the individuals who conspicuously interpreted one system through the other, mainly Indian through Chinese. The examination of the integration has proved that there were Chinese beliefs which were surprisingly compatible with Buddhist beliefs. The last part of the chapter furnishes the reader with some stories taken from the short-story collections of the period in question, and demonstrates how hybrid moral belief was not only applicable in the propagation of kindness towards animals but in

explaining from a moral viewpoint why being kind towards animals is necessary.

The discussions advancing our understanding in the above respects also indicate some factors that may have contributed to a considerable extent to the Chinese acceptance of Buddhism, which may form a general characteristic of early Chinese Buddhism. The most significant factor is that the indigenous Chinese traditions seemed to have played a fundamental role in the development of the traditions and beliefs dealt with in this study. We have seen that the Chinese, both pro-Buddhist and anti-Buddhist, tended to search in their own culture for the elements that could help them to understand and accept, or even reject Buddhism. It was this conscious search for equivalents that resulted in the discovery of cultural similarities between the Chinese and the Indian Buddhists. It is true that prohibition against animal sacrifice was not part of Chinese culture before the coming of Buddhism, but the government bans on animal sacrifices seemed to have been one of the distinguishing features of Chinese Buddhism. For although Emperor Aśoka from time to time banned people from killing animals, no evidence shows that he abolished animal sacrifice.

The first chapter shows how the long tradition of vegetarian practice in China smoothly integrated into the Buddhist practice of *zhaijie* despite the fact that the Chinese vegetarian tradition existed for reasons other than the Buddhist concern for showing kindness towards animals. Even the *zhaijie* itself is another equivalent point between the Chinese and the Indian Buddhists, although its sinicization was potentially done in the translation of the Indian term. This was further transformed by the attitude and practice of taking the Buddhist *baguan zhai* as almost the same practice as the Chinese *zhaijie* which requires abstaining from eating meat. In other words, the medium through which the vegetarian practice in the Chinese *zhaijie* contributed to the development of the Buddhist vegetarian practice is the Buddhist fast.

We lack sources that can inform us about whether or not the Indian Buddhists practised *fangsheng* as described in the texts. As a custom, however, the Indian Buddhist community did not develop one as such, while in Chinese culture, which had no rule prohibiting killing animals, restrictions and measures on hunting animals and a few isolated cases of releasing young animals suggest that the notion of releasing animals out of kindness was not entirely alien to the Chinese. Besides, apart from a

possible Buddhist influence in terminology, the custom of releasing doves was originally a Chinese practice.

The first part of the third chapter reveals that in terms of beliefs in morality, the Chinese and the Indian Buddhists share a great deal, that is if we accept that those story texts marked as translations were truly of Indic origin. Similarities also contributed to the Chinese acceptance of Buddhist karma and its related beliefs. In fact, the relationship between *tianming* to *baoying* can be regarded as that between karma to cause-effect.

It is worth pointing out that the outcome of the blending of indigenous Chinese beliefs and traditions with Buddhist doctrines is often labelled as Buddhist tradition even though, as we have shown in this study, the Buddhist label was often co-opted to legitimise vernacular orthodoxy, or folk beliefs and customs.

Another obvious indication of this study is the important role of the vigorous participation of the Chinese laity in Buddhist life, including the literati and members of the ruling houses, and often the participation, or even propagation in some cases, of the literati led to the emperors' encouragement. The early literati who became Buddhists engaged in Buddhist activities individually and congregationally. We saw in the first chapter that there were individuals and groups who restrained from eating meat while observing the *zhaijie*. Apart from their practice of Buddhism, the major significance of the literati's engagement in Buddhist activities lies in their open debates over Buddhist doctrinal points, because, second only to monks' public preaching, their debates helped to spread Buddhism to more people in society. Besides, the Buddhist literati and, in some cases, non-Buddhist literati, also contributed to government policy concerning Buddhism. The issue of bans on animal sacrifices, the imperial codification of vegetarianism as a monastic rule and the royal encouragement of *fangsheng* were all done with the help of influential lay persons. The literati's final contribution in promoting Buddhism comes from the stories they wrote. Dozens of short-story collections were composed with the obvious agenda of spreading Buddhism, although only a handful of them have survived.

Even more essential for the spread of Buddhism was the favour of the ruling house, because the effects from their participation were unquestionably larger than that caused by the literati. Their power had the effect of law and their engagement in religious practices would be taken as

an example by the masses. Traditions existed as popular practice, but it was the emperor who made vegetarianism compulsory for the *sengren* and greatly popularised the custom of *fangsheng*.

This study also identifies the significant role played by the dubious *Fanwang jing*. How this text came to be recognised by Buddhists is not clear, but its importance for the continuity of vegetarianism and *fangsheng* began when it was used as a manual of the Bodhisattva ordination. The edicts that legitimised vegetarianism as a rule for the *sengren* and that encouraged *fangsheng* could expire when a dynasty ended, so long as the text was accepted and put into practice, these traditions could continue, as monastic rules to be followed by the *sengren*.

Finally, this study gives support to the impression that some early Chinese Buddhist customs and beliefs are in fact hybrid productions of Chinese culture and Indian Buddhism. In terms of practice, vegetarianism and *fangsheng* were creations of the Chinese under the stimulation of Buddhist culture. After all, Buddhism in India never developed these two traditions as permanent practices for its followers.

APPENDIX

From all the catalogues of Chinese Buddhist translations, we can see that the records on a group of sūtras entitled *guanding jing* are confusing, and therefore need a few words of clarification. The word ‘guanding’ literally means ‘to pour water on the top of one’s head,’ a sign of baptism or of the consecration of a king. According to Sengyou’s catalogue, the twelve fascicles of the *Guangding jing* were originally twelve individual sūtras all of whose titles began with the word *guanding*. Sengyou regarded the first eleven to be genuine translations, though their translators were unknown to him. A modern scholar suggests that those eleven chapters show Chinese intrusions.¹ However, all later catalogues list the first nine sūtras together as a single translation, collectively called *Guanding jing* and attributed their translation to Śīmitra (帛尸利蜜多 fl. ca. 318-343). Some of them also list all twelve as one translation called *Da guanding jing* (大灌頂經).²

A detailed study of this *Da guanding jing* has been made by Michel Strickmann. He deals with the whole translation but focuses on the twelfth *juan*, i. e. the *Guangding jing* of our concern. He assigns six features to the text which marks it as ‘the first’ in those respects, but in some cases these do not appear to be accurate designations. For instance, as the custom of acquiring merit on behalf of one’s dead ancestors was already practised in second century BCE India; the appearance of that doctrine in this text was therefore not a Chinese invention, even if the text itself was set down in China.³ What is more, he seems to have overlooked some of its other noteworthy characteristics. For example, that it is the first sūtra to employ the word *fangsheng* and to exaggerate the benefit of merit acquired

¹ Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha* (2nd ed., Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1989), p. 56.

² CSZJJ, T. 55, p. 31; LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 69a; *Zhongjing mulu*, T. 55, p. 120b; *Zhongjing mulu*, T. 55, p. 151a, 163c; *Datang neidian lu*, T. 55, p. 303a, 313c; *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T. 55, p. 593c, 705b; *Zhongjing mulu*, T. 55, p. 198b, etc.

³ See Gregory Schopen, ‘Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of “Sinicization” Viewed from the other Side’ (*Toung Pao* LXX 1984), pp. 110-126.

through *fangsheng*. Ignoring the fact that the theme of this text is the same as that of the three later genuine translations, and that all four versions share a great similarity in their treatment of the theme, he argues that circumstantial evidence from China's social history in the fifth century during which the text occurred, can only conclude that the text was compiled by a Chinese monk.⁴

His failure to consider all the information available from all the catalogues and to compare the four translations of the text raises doubts over his general conclusions. Yet, here we need only discuss the last fascicle of the text—*Dedu jing* (得度經), because only that part concerns the subject of this study. In addition to the version in question, there are three later translations of which the first is the *Foshuo yaoshi rulai benyuan jing* (佛說藥師如來本願經 T. 14, pp. 401b-404c), the second *Yaoshi liuliguang rulai benyuan gongde jing* (藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經 T. 14, pp. 404c-408b), and the third *Yaoshi liuliguang qifo benyuan gongde jing* (藥師琉璃光七佛本願功德經 T. 14, pp. 409a-418a). The first was translated in the Sui dynasty, the second and the third in the Tang dynasty. Yen Chih-hung has made a short comparative study of these four versions. He deals with them through four aspects of the theme shared by the four versions, finding that they display the same main features, differing only in details.⁵ However, he seems to have mistakenly believed that originally there were in total five translations. He takes it for granted that Śīmitra was the first to translate the text named as *Dedu jing* (得度經, 'sūtra on obtaining emancipation'), and that Shi Huijian (釋惠簡 fl. 435) made a second translation which is now lost. In reality, this *Dedu jing* is the one that had been attributed to Śīmitra but was actually made known by Huijian.

The translation in question is considered by Sengyou and Shi Fajing (釋法經 fl.594) to be a combination of extracts taken by Huijian from other translations in 435—i.e. it is a compilation based on authentic sūtras. Yet, this view is not borne out by the rest of the catalogues (*Datang neidian lu*, T. 55, p. 260c, *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T. 55, p. 531c, etc.) and is particularly disproved by Fei Changfang (費長房 fl. 585-597) who specifically points

⁴ See his 'The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells' (Robert E. Buswell Jr ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, 1990), pp. 81, 89.

⁵ See his 'Bhaisajyaguru of Dunhuang' (PhD dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 1998), pp. 26-28, 263-286.

out that this text cannot be a forgery, since he has seen a Sanskrit original, and that its *dhāraṇī* words differ slightly from the received one, i. e. the Sanskrit manuscript from which the Sui translation was made (LDSBJ, T. 49, p. 93b). According to the preface to the Sui translation, there were already two versions of Sanskrit manuscripts even in the Sui dynasty, and the reason for re-translating it was because Huijian's translation was not properly done (T. 14, p. 401a). So Huijian's version of the text was considered to be a translation, although a poor quality one. Given that the two translations were made by Shi Yijing and Xuanzang, who are both said to have searched for genuine dharma in India, that there existed a Sanskrit version of such text should be beyond any doubt. Apart from the similarities pointed out by Yen, the text shares with the three other later translations its theme and structure. Thus, it is generally accepted that all three versions go back to a common source.⁶ In fact, amongst the three later translations, only Yijing's one, i.e. the latest translation, contains the *dhāraṇī* words which, except for the number of words and terminology used by the two different translators who were several centuries apart, bear similarities to the one that is included in the text under discussion.⁷ After all, Yijing's translation is the longest of all the four, running to two fascicles, while each of the other three extends only to one.

Such differences in length, concept and terminology may suggest that the later Sanskrit versions were revised, and in some cases, enlarged copies of their earlier versions. This suggestion is a strongly plausible one. Scholars have found that the Sanskrit fragments and texts discovered at Gilgit in central Asia appear to differ from their later equivalent Sanskrit manuscripts.⁸ Plus, at least two studies show that the originals used for some early Chinese translations may have been earlier versions of their surviving Sanskrit versions. For instance, the present Avadānaśataka has been attested to be a later enlarged version of the Sanskrit original from

⁶ Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha*, pp. 57-8.

⁷ See T. 21, p. 536a, T. 14, p. 414c.

⁸ See, for example, A. F. R. Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan*, Oxford University Press, 1916. A good demonstration can be seen in Lewis Lancaster's 'The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development' (*Eastern Buddhism* 8:1, 1975), pp.30-41. A Sanskrit copy, which reads highly possible to be the original of Yijing's translation, is also among the texts discovered in Gilgit (Yen Chih-hung, *Bhaiṣajyaguru of Dunhuang*, p. 31).

which the Chinese translation was made.⁹ One may suggest that these differences could be due to the possibility that copies of one single original (whatever language it was in) were preserved by different traditions and in different places, and subsequent accretions were added by various different traditions or persons, instead of a single original having developed into a larger version over the course of time. This does not seem to disprove the fact that the earlier version, which differs from later ones, was a real one, as long as all the versions resemble one another in great detail. This is to say that the Buddhist Sanskrit sūtras are by no means to be considered unchanging as time went by. Therefore, it may be speculated that the text in question could have been a translation of a genuine Sanskrit text which, through interpolations, became the original of the three later Chinese translations. At worst, the original that the first Chinese translation was made from and the versions used by later translators could have been the same text, preserved by different traditions.¹⁰ No matter which of these two speculations is, or is close to, the truth, it may well be suggested that the early Chinese translation, i.e. this *Dedu jing*, may have been a work based on an authentic original.

However, the information that the text was translated by Śīmitra provided by later catalogues cannot be verified, although the information on when it became known to the Buddhist community may be taken as the beginning of its circulation. The year was 435, when Huijian is believed to have compiled it.

⁹ See P. C. Bagchi, 'A Note on the Avadānaśataka and its Chinese Translation' (*Visva-Bharati Annals* 1, 1945), pp. 56-61; Fa Chow, 'Chuan Tsi Pai Yuan King and the Avadānaśataka' (*Visva-Bharati Annals* 1, 1945), pp. 35-55.

¹⁰ The example of this possibility can be provided by the case of the Samādhirāja-sūtra. For a study and translation of this text, see Luis O. Gómez and Jonathan A. Silk eds., *Studies in the Literature of the Great Vehicle: Three Mahāyāna Buddhist Texts* (Ann Arbor: collegiate Institute for the Study of Buddhist Literature and Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan, 1989), part I.

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